

THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

ZONE

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THE RED SHOES

MATTHEW BOURNE BRINGS
HIS LATEST MODERN BALLET
TO BIRMINGHAM
INTERVIEW INSIDE

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

TEN WAYS TO LOOK AND
FEEL GREAT FOR 2017

LOVE & PRIDE

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE
ANNOUNCE THEME FOR 2017



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BIANCA DEL RIO

THE RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE WINNER
HEADS TO THE MIDLANDS





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BIANCA DEL RIO

The RuPaul's Drag Race season-six winner heads to Birmingham with her Not Today Satan comedy tour...

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few years, you'll have heard of the drag reality show and TV sensation that is RuPaul's Drag Race.

A kind of cross between hit competitive fashion shows Project Runway and America's Next Top Model, RuPaul's Drag Race throws in much-loved elements of drag culture, including design, lip synching, sass and attitude.

The hit show, which is now coming up to its ninth season, debuted in the US back in 2009. It reached the UK via Netflix, finally finding its way onto 'proper' TV screens last year, when it aired on TruTV.

The appeal of the show is not only the reality TV elements that have become so popular in the past decade, but also the sequin-drenched celebration of all things drag.

The fact that drag is a staple of the UK's gay culture meant the series was destined to enjoy success in Britain.

Rewind to 2014 and season six of RuPaul. It was here that we were introduced to Bianca Del Rio.

Bianca's creator, Roy Haylock, 41, was formerly an award-winning theatrical costume designer by day and a stand-up comedian in gay bars and clubs in New Orleans and New York by night.

Roy first entered the world of drag in the show Pageant at the New Orleans Opera, where he was working as a makeup artist and costume designer.

There was a small drag role within the play, and with Roy's experience in makeup and costume, he was a perfect fit for the part. And so began a career in drag that would lead to his creation, Bianca, joining 13 other drag queens on Drag Race. Her rivals in the show included Adore Delano, Courtney Act and BenDeLaCreme.

Bianca hit the ground running, quickly becoming a fan favourite. In the final show of the season, she was crowned champion, taking top spot from Adore and Courtney. But as you might expect, the TV series was only the beginning of a career in the limelight.

A debut comedy show followed, The Rolodex Of Hate stopping off at venues across the United States as well as in European cities including London and Amsterdam.

Next up was a feature-length movie called Hurricane Bianca. Aiming to explore the subject of homophobia, it told the story of a man who is sacked from his job in a conservative US town on account of his being gay. At the time the movie was made, employers in a staggering 29 states of the country were still permitted in law to dismiss an employee on the grounds of their sexuality.

The feature film was planned way before Bianca's appearance on Drag Race, but her new-found fame propelled the crowdfunded project to previously unimaginable heights of success, allowing her to team up with comedian and actress Margaret Cho and Scottish actor Alan Cumming.

And now, following all the success of the past few years, Bianca is back on tour, this time with her all-new show, Not Today Satan.

The tour will visit 11 destinations in the UK - as well as Europe and the States - and stops off at Birmingham's Symphony Hall next month for one night only.

Speaking about the new show, Bianca said: "When I'm not busy volunteering at the soup kitchen or knitting socks for orphans, one of my favourite past-times is gathering the cold, huddled masses into a nice warm room, giving them shelter if only for an hour, and sharing valuable life advice from a hate guru!"

Tickets for Bianca Del Rio's Not Today Satan tour are on sale now. The Birmingham performance of the show takes place at Symphony Hall on Monday 6 February. Buy your tickets at thsh.co.uk



THE RED SHOES

Heather Kincaid catches up with choreographer Matthew Bourne to talk about his stage reinvention of 'the greatest dance film ever made'.



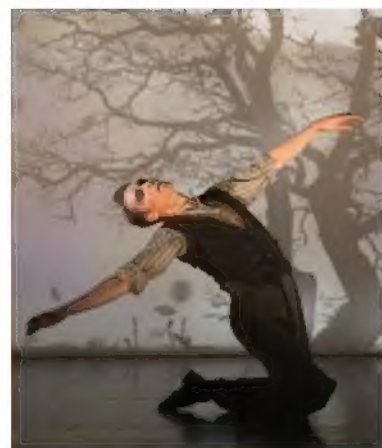
"How would you define ballet?" So asks the tyrannical dance instructor, Boris Lermontov, in Powell and Pressburger's 1948 classic *The Red Shoes*, going on to reveal that for him, "it is religion." Widely regarded as the greatest dance film ever made, *The Red Shoes* centres on a young ballerina and star in the making, Vicky Page. When Vicky falls for the company's charismatic composer, Julian Craster, however, the jealous Lermontov forces her to choose between love and her career, knowing full well that for Vicky, dancing is as much a necessity as living.

In a sumptuous new adaptation headed for Birmingham Hippodrome next month, Matthew Bourne reinvents the story live on stage, delving deep into the film's strange, unsettling atmosphere and the complex psychology of its characters. It's one that's been on his 'to-do' list for quite some time.

"Generally, I don't really like films about dance, or dance about dance, so in some ways it was an odd choice for me," Bourne reveals. "I first saw the film when I was a teenager, before I'd ever even seen a ballet, so really, it was the thing that introduced me to the world of dance, and I think that's true for many people. It was a kind of weird and eccentric world that I fell in love with the idea of."

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale about a pair of enchanted shoes that force their wearer to dance until she dies, the film reworks Andersen's warning against vanity into a tale of all-consuming, almost Faustian ambition. Upon rewatching the film, Bourne says he was surprised to find himself feeling more sympathetic towards the manipulative instructor than he had been in the past: years of experience with dancers have taught him that to be the best at something invariably demands sacrifice, and there is some truth to the view that love can be a distraction.

"People do have a problem sometimes with defining someone who is very ambitious as someone who is too pushy or whatever, but I don't think ambition should be frowned upon so much. I feel like [Vicky] knows that she's good. She doesn't expect everything to happen to her, but she knows she has



talent, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that."

In his own take on the story, Vicky has even more reason to be ambitious. A wartime orphan living with an increasingly distant aunt, she's far less privileged than in the film. Like Bourne himself, she begins as something of an outsider to this world, taking nothing for granted and accustomed to striving hard for success. To have come so far perhaps makes the prospect of hanging up her ballet shoes all the more difficult to accept.

"If you watch the film, in her very first appearance, she's sitting at the ballet in a beautiful dress with a sort of crown or tiara on her head. It is quite extreme, and perhaps that's one of the things people like about it, but when you're telling a story today, people tend to prefer the idea of someone who has to struggle a bit more. She's only from slightly more humble beginnings – she's not a Little Match Girl waif – but it's not a foregone conclusion that she's going to get everything she wants."

In addition to rewriting Vicky's backstory, Bourne has also worked on fleshing out the life and work of the company as a whole, providing them with a repertoire of their own.

"We have several little ballets in the piece which the company are either rehearsing or performing. There's a beach ballet which creates a link to the actual beach when they visit Monte Carlo. In the second half, we have what we call the 'Good vs Evil' ballet – it's called *Concerto Macabre* in the programme – which reflects the atmosphere of what's going on in the story at that point. That's based on a famously barefoot ballet Frederick Ashton did called *Dante's Sonata*. We also do a bit of *Les Sylphides*, and then there's a big, grand, glamorous, waltzy ballet near the beginning to represent the world she wants to be a part of. So it's almost like watching a bit of dance history – you can see all the references."

It's a history that Bourne has been encouraging his dancers to investigate and work into their performances. As well as picking up on similarities between Ballet Lermontov and his own company, New Adventures, he's based his vision of them on his knowledge of 1940s Sadler's Wells, before it became the Royal Ballet, when things were still a little rough around the edges.

"The dancers in a ballet company are very different now – much more sleek and technically advanced than they would have been in those days," he explains. "I always get [the dancers] to do a lot of research for my shows, and it's been quite a fun project for them to get to know what it was like then, though there were a couple of things we couldn't follow. The men at that time weren't very good, for example – anyone who was vaguely interested would be in a company because male dancers were so hard to come by, so I've told them they have to dance better than that!"

Famously, the big finale is a new ballet version of the original Hans Christian Andersen tale, with striking visuals and an almost unreal quality. In Bourne's dance version, *The Red Shoes* ballet has been made to deliberately stand apart from the more traditional, period styles of design and movement employed earlier in the show.

"We've tried to make it feel like they're doing something new and original and forward-looking, so the movement is more contemporary in some ways. We've also tried to create a look that's very different from the rest of the show – I don't want to give away too much because it comes as quite a surprise when it happens, but the whole set changes. I guess it's a bit like an MGM musical with Gene Kelly or Fred Astaire where they'd have what they used to call a dream ballet."

Not only does this mark a sharp change from the rest of the production, it's also something of a departure for Matthew Bourne and New Adventures, involving the

sort of complex point work he's always tended to avoid. Even the music has been chosen to lift this sequence out of its time, pushing it into the brave new world of the 1960s with music from the score of Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*.

In keeping with the movie inspiration, the whole score for the production has been pieced together from works by the legendary film composer Bernard Herrmann – best known for his iconic soundtracks to *The Twilight Zone* and *Psycho*, among various other Hitchcock films.

"Bernard Herman has a wonderful sort of bittersweet feeling about his music which really suits the story very well. I think it's one of the real surprises of the piece how amazing the score is, and it's all been brought together and arranged by Terry Davies, so it sounds like one score rather than lots of different bits and pieces."

"I made a decision not to use any of the Hitchcock scores because people would be thinking about other things if they heard those, so I've chosen less well-known stuff from the 30s and 40s. There are some concert pieces he wrote, as well as some from a film called *The Ghost of Mrs Muir*, which I've always felt has one of the most beautiful film scores ever. There's also some from *Citizen Kane*, which I've known for many years but never realised before how great the music is for dancing."

With the abundance of TV talent shows, a growing obsession with celebrities and increasing competition for creative careers, the story of what it takes to be a star feels in many ways more timely now than ever, even if dancers don't yet enjoy the same recognition as their contemporaries in acting and music. But perhaps the success of shows like *Strictly* is set to change all that...

.....

The Red Shoes shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 7 until Saturday 11 February.

50 years since the
decriminalisation of
homosexuality...

1967-2017



Birmingham Pride organisers announce 'Love & Pride' theme for 2017's two-day LGBT festival to mark anniversary...

This year marks fifty years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the United Kingdom, and as a result, organisers of Birmingham Pride have announced that this year's festival will adopt the theme Love & Pride, in recognition of this momentous anniversary.

Back in 1967, the Sexual Offences Act decriminalised homosexual acts between two men in private. The move was a first step on the long road towards the equality that the LGBT community enjoys today. Since that landmark year, laws have been challenged, rights have been won, stigmas broken and lives changed.

So how did we get to that landmark moment in LGBT history? Rewind to the 1960s, when Member of Parliament Leo Abse and House of Lords peer Lord Arran offered proposals to amend the law for homosexual men, changing the way they were treated by introducing the Sexual Offences Bill. They saw the Bill as a way to make attitudes towards gays more liberal, a change which they felt was much needed following a staggering rise in the number of prosecutions of homosexual men.

The 1965 Sexual Offences Bill used findings from the 1957 Wolfenden Report, which suggested that certain homosexual offences should be decriminalised; 'offences' at which you wouldn't even bat an eyelid these days. The committee which oversaw the report was

set up to investigate prostitution and homosexuality in the 1950s. As a result, they found that criminal law couldn't intervene in the 'private sexual affairs of consenting adults' behind closed doors.

In short, the Wolfenden committee said that: "Unless a deliberate attempt be made by society through the agency of the law to equate the sphere of crime with that of sin, there must remain a realm of private that is, in brief, not the law's business."

Following the publication of this report, the government of the time showed support for Lord Arran's liberal thinking and put the Bill through parliament. It was considered that the law should not penalise gay men, already subject to much 'ridicule and derision'.

Roy Jenkins, the home secretary in 1967, commented that gay men "suffer from this disability" and "carry a great weight of shame". His remarks essentially summed up the government's perspective on homosexuality.

The Bill received royal assent on 27 July 1967 after a late-night debate in the House of Commons. Once it had become law, decriminalising homosexuality, the age of consent was set at 21. It wasn't until 1994 that this was reduced to 18, and only in the year 2000 was it reduced to 16 - the same age as the heterosexual age of consent.

So what does all of this mean for us today? Well, freedom for one thing. And whilst LGBT communities across the world still don't enjoy many of the freedoms that we do here in Britain, the Love & Pride-themed Birmingham Pride festival, taking place over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend in May, will use the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality to celebrate, educate, inspire and fund-raise.

Commenting on the two-day event's 2017 theme, Lawrence Barton, Birmingham Pride's festival director, said: "Love & Pride is an important message that highlights the history which the LGBT community has been through - most importantly, the decriminalisation of homosexuality 50 years ago.

"We've got a lot planned for Birmingham Pride 2017, making it bigger and better than in previous years. The festival will look to educate, celebrate and, most of all, to raise lots of money for local LGBT charities and causes."

Birmingham Pride 2017 takes place on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 May in the heart of the city's gay village. If you're interested in joining the iconic Carnival Parade or helping out at the festival as a volunteer, email peter@birminghampride.com. Tickets for the two-day event are now available at birminghampride.com.

Birmingham Pride 2017 adopts the theme Love & Pride to commemorate 50 years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK



Miss Moneypenny's returns to Birmingham with 25th anniversary 'gay orchestra' event

It was the glamorous club brand that put Birmingham on the map in the early 1990s. Now, to mark 25 years since Miss Moneypenny's began, Birmingham's dance music heritage will spectacularly fuse with the powerful world of orchestra to bring music lovers a sensational new show.

Miss Moneypenny's A Night At The Proms will take place in the autumn, on 24 November, at Birmingham's Symphony Hall. The event will be Miss Moneypenny's first show in the city for nearly 10 years and will kick-start a short series of anniversary activities.

Renowned for its compelling, uplifting, energetic brand of house music mixed with creative themes, dancers, theatrical artistes and live performers, Miss Moneypenny's entertained people around the globe and became a firm favourite on the dance music scene. For this one-off spectacular, the club brand's music will be innovatively adapted and arranged for the 60-piece Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra.

A Night At The Proms will be curated by Miss Moneypenny's musical director, Jim Ryan, and orchestrated by Martin Higgins.

The lavish production and mind-blowing theatrical visuals that were integral to each Miss Moneypenny's night will also be an essential part of the show.

The aim of the event is to recall the halcyon days when house music was as iconic as the DJs, and clubbers made the dancefloor come alive.

From humble beginnings in Birmingham, Miss



Moneypenny's grew into a massive international club brand. Highly regarded for its flamboyant, glamorous, individual and hedonistic club nights, the brand remains rooted in the

heart and soul of clubbers across the Midlands and beyond. For tickets - priced at £35, £40 and £45 - visit thsh.co.uk.

Birmingham weekend extravaganza set to raise funds for LGBT+ equality charity

A 'weekend extravaganza of fun and relaxation', in aid of LGBT+ equality charity Stonewall, is taking place at Birmingham's Malmeson hotel this month.

The event is scheduled for Friday 6 and Saturday 7 January at the Mailbox's four-star hotel. Special rates for accommodation are being offered to those attending.

The weekend will start with a night of chocolate tasting, a three-course evening meal and a disco. The following evening will feature a fashion show, a prize draw presentation by Stonewall, a magician, chocolate tasting, a three-

course evening meal and a disco. Special accommodation rates of £67 per person, per night, bed and breakfast (based on two sharing, £110 single occupancy) are being offered to guests attending the event and are inclusive of the event ticket.

For those living in the city and not in need of accommodation, individual event tickets cost £35.

Malmeson will also be offering 20% off spa treatments to attendees, as well as discounted parking.

Places are limited and people are urged to book early by calling 0121 246 5030.



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1980s myths around HIV still 'deeply entrenched'

A World AIDS Day survey has revealed that 30% of gay and bisexual men believe you can get HIV from sharing a toothbrush - and one in 10 think it's passed on through kissing.

On World AIDS Day, which took place at the beginning of December, a survey by Terrence Higgins Trust revealed the extent to which myths and inaccuracies about HIV are still prevalent among gay and bisexual men in Great Britain.

The charity warned that public perceptions are still mirroring those seen in the 1980s, despite the medical progress that has been made in the fight against HIV over the last three decades.

The YouGov survey of over 2,000 adults (including 118 gay and bisexual men) showed that 30% of male gay and bisexual respondents believed that sharing a toothbrush with someone who was HIV positive could pass on the virus.

Meanwhile one in 10 gay and bisexual men surveyed believed HIV could be transmitted by kissing.

Both of these beliefs are medically inaccurate; the virus does not survive outside the body and cannot be passed on through saliva or skin-to-skin contact.

Ian Green, Chief Executive of Terrence Higgins Trust, said: "We've come a long way since the AIDS crisis first emerged, when the nation was gripped by panic and fear.

"Thankfully, we now know far more about how HIV is and is not transmitted, and medical advances now mean HIV doesn't have to stand in the way of living a long and healthy life.

"But it's not over - while science has moved on, we can see today that inaccurate myths from the 1980s are still deeply entrenched in society, both in terms of how HIV is transmitted and what it's like to live with HIV.

"Misunderstanding of the virus can fuel stigma and cause immense distress for people coming to terms with a HIV diagnosis. Much more needs to be done to bring the British public up to date with what HIV means in 2017."

The survey also revealed public perceptions do not reflect how far HIV treatment itself has come in the past 30 years. Effective treatment works by reducing the amount of the virus in the blood to undetectable levels, meaning it can't be passed on at all, and people can expect to live as long as anyone else.

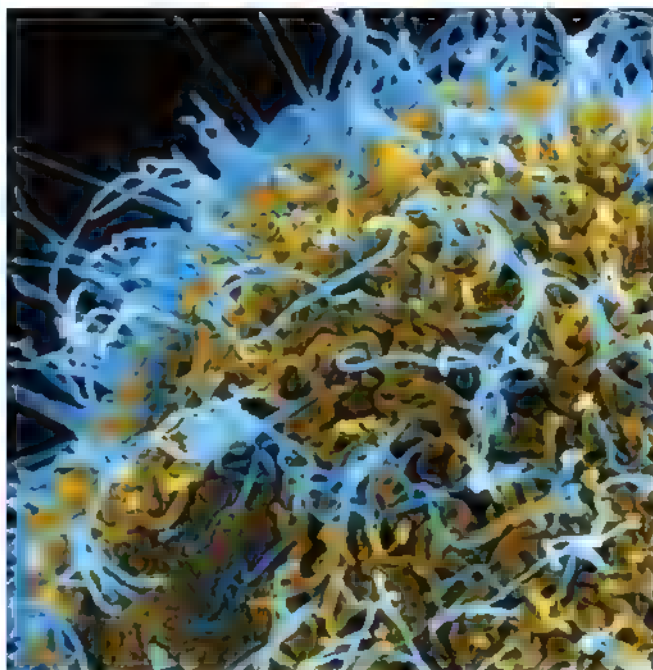
However, only 28% of the gay and bisexual men surveyed were aware that people on effective HIV treatment could have children without passing on the virus, and only 61% believed that people with HIV could live into old age.

Less than half (45%) of gay and bisexual men surveyed were aware that people with HIV could have sex without passing on the virus, as long as they were on effective treatment.

And only one in four (24%) gay and bisexual men in the YouGov survey agreed that there was currently a HIV epidemic in the UK. A majority (68%) disagreed.

Ian Green added: "The HIV epidemic is not over in the UK - there are more people living with HIV in the UK today than ever before. We must not let complacency and misunderstanding undo decades of progress."

Birmingham researcher explores barriers stopping MSMs seeking information about STIs



A researcher at Birmingham City University is investigating the social and cognitive barriers deterring men who have sex with other men (MSM) from finding out more information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Psychology researcher Naomi Pierce hopes the research will help to better identify how different social groups may have different risk profiles when it comes to catching and passing on STIs.

"There has been a lot of progress in tackling HIV and AIDS, but other STIs can sometimes be overlooked," says Naomi. "STI rates within the community of men who have sex with other men are on the rise."

A report published by Public Health England in 2015 revealed increases in STI diagnosis in men who have sex with other men; syphilis by 46%, gonorrhoea by 32%, chlamydia by 26% and genital herpes and warts by 10% each.

Naomi is currently in the early stages of her research and has begun to speak with local healthcare organisations to share her plans.

Through a combination of focus groups and questionnaires, she will explore the social issues deterring men who have sex with men from seeking information on STIs, which may include social group and peer behaviour.

Naomi will also look into the cognitive barriers, including the thinking patterns surrounding the subject of STIs that might make information-seeking difficult.

Focus groups will ask MSM participants for their views on why seeking information about STIs might be challenging, whilst anonymous questionnaires will ask MSMs about sexual health more generally.

Naomi is one of 50 'STEAM Scholars' at Birmingham City University. The Scholars' research is funded as part of the University's £3million initiative to create new subject knowledge and to power cultural, societal and economic improvements in the West Midlands.

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Day: Thursdays

Time: 3pm - 6pm

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Further information available
www.leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk



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New clinic launched to support Birmingham's trans community



A new clinic dedicated to supporting the trans community in Birmingham and Solihull is being launched by Birmingham LGBT, with support from Umbrella sexual health services.

The monthly clinic will offer quality, accessible and appropriate sexual health and wellbeing services for all trans people.

It will provide a safe, confidential space for those who may not feel comfortable accessing general sexual health services through Umbrella.

The clinic is consultant or nurse-led and facilitated by Birmingham LGBT's trans sexual health outreach worker and trans volunteers.

It will run on the fourth Friday of each month, from 4pm to 7pm, on a first-come, first-seen basis.

The sexual health team at Birmingham LGBT includes a dedicated trans sexual health outreach worker who provides specific sexual health and wellbeing services for trans people.

The trans outreach worker's focus is on the sexual health and wellbeing of trans people,

and understanding the barriers that the trans community can often encounter in accessing mainstream services.

The aim of the role is to

- Provide appropriate and easily accessible services for trans people to access and speak freely
- Provide a trans-specific sexual health and wellbeing clinic
- Provide confidential one-to-one support and advice around the subject of sexual health and wellbeing for trans people who require it
- Provide testing, information and sign-posting
- Provide a link between other relevant services and facilitate referrals
- Provide sexual health promotion outreach to various on/off scene venues
- Facilitate, organise and promote groups and events focusing on trans health

For more information about Birmingham LGBT's work, visit birminghamlgbt.org.uk

Author in search of gay Muslim young adults for new book

Gay author and social worker Declan Henry is on the lookout for gay Muslim young adults for a new book he is currently writing.

The author, whose previous works include *Trans Voices: Becoming Who You Are*, is hoping to hear from Zone readers who are gay and Muslim to elicit their views on the subject of Islam and young adults.

Interviews for the project will be conducted via telephone, with confidentiality assured.

If you would like more information about the project, or would like to volunteer your time to contribute, email declanhenry@hotmail.com

Shrewsbury to host national LGBT history festival

Shrewsbury has once again been selected as a hub for the National Festival of LGBT History.

Taking place on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 February as part of LGBT History Month, the festival will feature talks from Diana Souhami, Caroline Paige, Peter Scott Presland and Andrew Lumsden.

Other highlights of the event include presentations by schools and colleges, tastier presentations, a theatre piece and an evening of cabaret-style entertainment to round off the weekend.

For more information about the National Festival of LGBT History, visit shrewsburylgbthistory.org.uk

Founder of Sandwell & Dudley sexual health service honoured for life-changing work

Helen Brook, the founder of Brook, the UK's leading sexual health and wellbeing charity for young people, has been included in the BBC Radio Four Woman's Hour Power List for her crusade to help unmarried women in the 1960s.

The 2016 Power List celebrates seven women who have made the biggest impact on women's lives over the past seven decades.

The first Brook clinic opened in 1964. Its aims were to offer accessible support and contraception to unmarried women and to reduce the number of illegal abortions.

Today, Brook has nine services in Sandwell & Dudley, providing local young people with free and confidential information, contraception, pregnancy testing, advice and counselling, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

Alison Hamnett, Operations Manager for Sandwell & Dudley, said: "It's because of Helen Brook's hard work and bravery that young people in Sandwell & Dudley today are able to access free and confidential sexual health support and services. I feel proud to be part of this legacy."

Helen Marshall, Chief Executive of Brook, said: "Despite the fierce opposition and prejudice Helen Brook faced over 50 years ago, she created a pioneering health service for young women who desperately needed support. Today, faced with the enormous challenge of funding cuts, we must continue to work with the same passion and determination in order to meet the needs of young people nationwide."

For more information about local Brook services, visit brook.org.uk/sandwell-and-dudley



Louise Herbert

Crew member & promoter
L Fest, Shropshire

Born: Shrewsbury

Star sign: Cancer

Age: 38

"There's no rush to categorise yourself - be comfortable in your own skin"

About Louise

Where did you grow up?

In Shrewsbury, Shropshire. I had such a fun-packed childhood. I'd say I did my 'proper' growing up whilst repping in Greece in my late teens/early 20s, though!

Single or attached?

Attached

Would you consider getting married?

I'd consider it, of course I would

What makes you happy?

When I'm eating! I also love watching people smile

What makes you sad?

When bad luck impacts on people who don't deserve it.

What makes you angry?

Ignorance, dishonesty, fake people and liars

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

I'd relax and pamper myself more - I simply don't stop running around doing chores or helping others. I find it extremely difficult to refuse an invite!

What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done in your life?

When in Greece, guiding a beach excursion. In front of a group of people, I leapt off a jeep, ran and jumped into the sea.

It was only when I walked back up the beach that I realised my bikini was the wrong way round. My crutch piece was on my hip. Let's just say I was 'fully aired'

Coming Out

When did you first know you were gay?

I'd say early teens. However, I did have a fascination with a particular photo on my Belinda Carlisle cassette cover when I was aged about eight - I guess I know why that was now!

When did you come out?

I came out to my parents at aged 18. It wasn't a simple thing to do at all, but after all the tears, the weight off my shoulders was immense. They are absolutely amaz.ng

What was school like for you as a gay teenager?

I was very lucky in that I was of strong character, so school really wasn't an issue for me. I had a very close-knit group of friends beneath my wings too

Who was the first person you told you were gay, and what was their reaction?

I came out to my closest friends in Year 10 during an art lesson in school. I just said, "Girls, I have something to tell you - I'm gay". Their reaction was "Err, we know - we could tell from your Madonna pencil case!"

What would you say to a youngster trying to come to terms with their own sexuality?

There's no right or wrong way to come out. I'd certainly say confide in those you trust to begin with you'll be surprised how many people will be positive and proud of you. Some are even chuffed that you chose them to be the first to know! Remember that there's no rush to categorise yourself - be comfortable in your own skin first of all. And no matter how hard coming out appears to be, I

promise that it does get better from where you are

Have you ever had any experiences with the opposite sex?

Yes - hence why I'm a lesbian! Seriously, no long-term relationships. Let's just say I've 'dabbled' here and there!

Your Career

When you were younger, what did you want to be?

A Butlins Red Coat! I loved to watch them on stage, singing, dancing and playing games. I wanted to make people feel happy, like they did me.

What was your first job when you left school?

A travel agent on a youth training scheme. I worked for a very minimal fee but I loved it. I have a huge bucket list of places I wish to visit because of this

You work as part of the crew at L Fest - what exactly do you do?

I'm the longest-serving L Fest crew member promoter and 'wing-sista' for Cindy, L Fest's director. I've been there right from the start. I'm so proud of how successful it's become from just an idea in the boss's head.

What are the challenges of your job?

In the initial stages, the challenge we faced at L Fest was trying to get everyone to believe in it. In order to promote L Fest, I came up with the idea that, at every given opportunity, I'd drive a few willing friends to a location, stick on a green t-shirt, hand out leaflets and tell everyone and anyone how wonderful L Fest was.

What are the benefits of working for L Fest?

The benefit at that time was that we used to get to see the country, have so much fun and have a blatant excuse to go up and speak to any woman we wanted - all in the name of L Fest, of course! Nowadays, the benefits truly speak for themselves, L Fest is such a happy, laid-back festival, with literally something for everyone. It has a full, fun-packed programme, and we have numerous awards to prove it!

Gay Scene

How long have you been frequenting the Midlands gay scene?

I attended my first ever gay bar in the mid-'90s - The Peach Tree in Shrewsbury. Although I've been to many scenes throughout the UK, I have to say my favourite is Birmingham.

What's been your fondest memory of the gay scene?

It's hard to pick one particular memory, as there have been so many good ones. I have to say that Pride is always one of my favourites, though.

Who's your favourite cabaret act on the gay scene?

It has to be Vicky Jackson. Surely she's every lesbian's favourite, isn't she?!

Who's your favourite person on the gay scene?

I have no favourites! I am, however, partial to a few drinks in The Fox whenever I'm in Birmingham - it's a guaranteed fun night.

What do you most enjoy about the gay scene?

The fact I can feel at ease, with no prejudice, and just be myself.

What have you noticed about the way the gay scene has changed over the years?

You can tell that the scene is becoming more acceptable. There are more friends of gays happily socialising and mixing these days. And the bars are more varied, as they cater for more types of music, not just cheese (although this is my preference)!

How would you change the gay scene?

I wouldn't change it, as I think it changes enough with time.

Time Out

Where do you like to go on a night out?

I have to say my home town of Shrewsbury. It has some fabulous eateries and unique up-and-coming bars these days.

What do you do to relax?



I relax whenever I spend time with my nearest and dearest. My relaxing also consists of walking my dog, cooking and going to the gym.

What do you enjoy on telly?

I hardly watch TV, as I'm always out and about. If I do, it's usually a catch up with *Come or Hollyoaks*. Easy watching!

What was the last album or track you bought?

Sia - This Is Acting.

Which one website do you spend the most time on?

Facebook

Which type of holiday do you

prefer?

I love holidays of any sort. I have to say my most memorable one was a cruise around the Mediterranean. Incredible. My girlfriend and I are off to the Caribbean soon for another one with Olivia.com, and I seriously cannot wait. We're so excited!

Quickfire

Who's your favourite actor?

Patrick Swayze. So chuffed I had the honour of meeting him once upon a time.

What's your favourite book?

Anything by James Patterson - I love a good psychological thriller.

Half empty or half full?

Half full, every time.

What's your favourite food?

I'll eat everything - I'm a big foodie and will give anything a whirl.

And how about your favourite drink?

Amaretto

Madonna or Lady Gaga?

Madonna. One hundred million, billion percent!

If you could take a selfie with one person, alive or dead, who would it be?

Can I have two, please? Madonna and Emma Willis.



Birmingham **LGBT**

Supported by  **umbrella**

Sexual Health Services for LGBT People

Here to support you – not to judge you!

Our free and confidential services include:

- Free STI and HIV testing – 7 days a week
- Free Rapid HIV testing (results in 60 seconds)
- Free condoms, lube, dams and gloves
- One to one support with friendly and professional LGBT staff
- Weekly nurse led walk in sexual health clinic – every Thursday
- Clinic Trans – Trans people's sexual health clinic every – monthly every 4th Friday
- Peer Mentoring support
- Support around sexual and domestic abuse
- Referral to counselling and peer support

New opening hours

Mon: 8am – 8pm

Fri: 8am – 8pm

Tues, Wed, Thu: 9am – 9pm

Sat & Sun: 10am – 8pm

Contact the Sexual Health Team at the Birmingham LGBT Centre

birminghamlgbt.org.uk

umbrellahealth.co.uk

sexualhealth@bkgbt.org

0121 237 5700

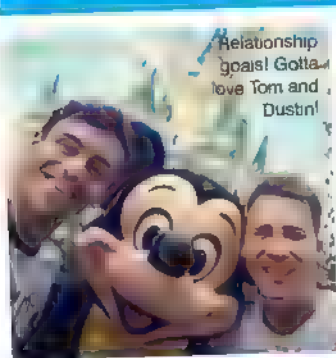
0121 643 0821

umbrellaatbirminghamlgbt

THE VIRAL ROUND UP

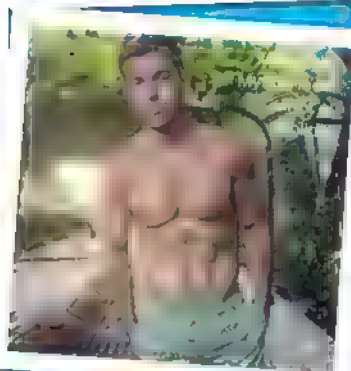
HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING AT ONLINE...

CELEB SNAPS! OUR FAVOURITE PICTURES FROM INSTAGRAM



We all do it - spend hours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Often, we're distracted from what we should be doing by cat videos and funny pranks - or by something feelgood that's been shared so much on the net it's officially classed as 'viral'. Well, here are some of Midlands Zone's favourites from the past month!

People react to *that* **1986 AIDS ADVERT** telling them they would die of AIDS



Back in 1986, the government wanted to scare people about AIDS.

As a result, they released a TV advert - the now infamous tombstone ad - that warned viewers not to 'die of ignorance'.

The advert worked, leaving quite the impression on everyone living in Thatcher's Britain.

Thirty years on, how do seven people react to the ad? Some are reliving it, others seeing it for the first time.

Many said that whilst they are more informed about HIV, the fear still remains.

You can watch the reaction video here youtu.be/In_8eqmzHo0

Watch these **BUFF BODY BUILDERS BELLY DANCING** for the first time...

Typically performed by women, belly dancing is considered something of an art form.

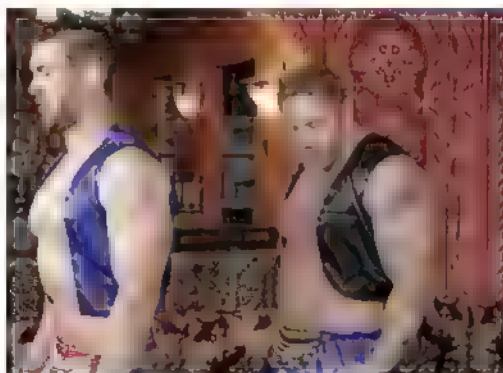
But that didn't stop three buff body builders giving it a go!

In this Buzzfeed video, we meet Jon, Steve and Tee - squeezing into their tiny costumes, shaking their hips and performing a couple of belly rolls.

They don't look out of their depth, though - they're actually quite good!

Check out the video over on YouTube here

youtu.be/6oCNDrLTQjw



New Year, New Approach!

Looking to be more sociable in 2017?

Meet new people and make great friends - come to one of our LGBT social and support groups in Stoke-on-Trent!

Visit www.lgbtstoke.co.uk



IT'S TIME TO VOTE!

The Midlands Zone **Readers' Awards** are back for 2017!

Yes, folks, it's that Midlands Zone Readers' Awards time of year again! We all have our favourite Midlands gay bars, clubs, stores, people, personalities and charities - and this is your chance to show how much you appreciate them. Nominate and vote for your favourites, to help them secure a title worthy of their work!



Lawrence Barton receives the award for Midlands Scene Personality of the Year in last year's Midlands Zone Readers' Awards.

Every year thousands of you step up to the plate and vote for your favourites in the Midlands LGBT community. And if you want to do the same in 2017, you've only got until Monday 16 January to take part in the first round of voting! Once we publish the February issue, we will be re-opening the voting and asking you to select from the TOP FIVE in each category.

All votes must be submitted online before Tuesday 26 February

And don't forget to enter our **FREE PRIZE DRAW** for your chance to win a whopping £1,000 in cash!

To enter, simply vote online and then complete our online readership survey

The results of the Midlands Zone Readers' Awards will be announced at an awards ceremony in March.

Keep 'em peeled for more information!

This year's categories

Best Birmingham Gay Nightclub
 Best Midlands Gay Nightclub (Outside B'ham)
 Best Birmingham Gay Bar
 Best Midlands Gay Bar (Outside B'ham)
 Best Midlands Community Pub/Bar
 Best Midlands Café Bar/Restaurant
 Best Midlands Overall Gay Venue
 Best Midlands Venue for Men
 Best Midlands Venue for Women
 Best Midlands Live Entertainment Venue
 Best Midlands Gay Venue - Outdoor Area
 Best Midlands One-Nighter
 Best New Midlands Gay Venue
 Best Midlands LGBT Pride Event
 Best Midlands LGBT Event
 Midlands LGBT Charity/Group of Achievement
 Midlands LGBT Social/Sports Group
 Midlands LGBT Personality of the Year
 Best Midlands Compere/Host
 Best Midlands Cabaret Act
 Best National Cabaret Act
 Midlands Friendliest Bar Person
 Midlands LGBT Venue with the Friendliest Bar Staff
 Midlands Friendliest Security/Door Person
 Midlands LGBT Venue with the Best Security Door Staff
 Midlands Bar DJ
 Midlands Club DJ
 Midlands Gay Sauna/Health Club
 Midlands LGBT Friendly Store or Online Store
 Youth Achievement Award
 Lifetime Achievement Award
 Outstanding Contribution to the LGBT Community

HOW TO VOTE:
SIMPLY LOG ON TO:
www.midlandszone.co.uk

The top finalists in each category will be selected on **MONDAY 16 JANUARY**. Their names will be published in the February issue. The voting will then continue until Tuesday 26 February.

To enter the free prize draw for £1,000, simply VOTE and complete our Readership Survey, and we'll select a lucky winner at random!





**Kick-start those
New Year's
resolutions!**

So you've over-indulged at Christmas, and your New Year resolution is to get yourself down to the gym, get fit and work towards that body you've always dreamed of. Well, here are 10 tips to get you started - the rest is up to you...

1 Recruit a friend

Working out with a friend not only stops you from feeling alone and isolated in your fitness programme, it also provides a sense of competition, which is a great way to stay motivated.

2 Set reasonable goals

No one is going to turn into Channing Tatum overnight. Set reasonable and achievable goals that you can meet. Nothing is more demotivating than feeling you've failed.

3 Don't worry about slipping up

We all have slip-ups, be it a party or just a bad day which has us reaching for the chocolate. Don't worry about it; just get back on the wagon the next day and carry on.

4 Eat breakfast

Eating breakfast helps to give your metabolism a kick-start. Think of the body's metabolism like a fire, by having a breakfast rich in nutrients and complex carbohydrates, you stoke the flames and set yourself up for the day ahead.

5 Choose exercise you enjoy

Don't force yourself to perform exercises you don't like. Simply put, you won't stick with them. Anything that raises your heart rate is a cardio exercise - so if you love to dance, take a dance class; if you like to swim, then swim. Making sure that you enjoy your workouts is a great way to keep you going back for more.

6 Up the ante

It takes six weeks for the body to adapt to exercise. Once this has happened, you need to increase the intensity of your workout to ensure continued progress. This can be done by moving faster or for longer, or by

lifting greater weight or changing the exercise - anything to challenge the body again.

7 Stretch

The pain and postural problems caused by overly tight muscles can put you out of action for weeks. You can prevent this by making sure you get into the habit of stretching both after you warm-up and at the end of your workout.

8 Ditch processed foods

It's so important to fuel your body properly while following a fitness programme. You're putting your body under stress, and need to put something good back into it. Think wholemeal, unrefined carbohydrates, as well as lean proteins such as skinless chicken and fish, plus plenty of fruit and vegetables.

9 Quantify things

Take measurements, whether they be body measurements or resting heart rate. Having something that you can monitor closely will allow you to observe changes that you might not otherwise notice.

10 Avoid fad diets

Anything that offers you a quick fix, or seems too good to be true, probably is - and may actually do you serious harm. Aim for a fat loss or muscle gain of around 1lb a week. Slow, steady progress is the best way to make safe, permanent changes to your lifestyle, body and mental attitude towards health and fitness.

Ageing Better Together



Attend, Organise & Connect

Ageing Better in Birmingham can support people of all ages to set up new groups and activities which will be attractive to people who are 50 and over. If you've got a hobby or interest to share, a good idea to develop, or simply if you want to get out and socialise more, Ageing Better can help.

You Can Join In

receive the LGBT Hub newsletter by email or post. If you've got ideas about the kind of

to hear from you.

Set up

The LGBT Hub can also help you set up your own Ageing Better Network and run your own group or activities. If you are already in a group, it can become an Ageing Better Network and get supported to try to reach new people.



AGEING
BETTER IN
BIRMINGHAM

For an informal chat, please contact us. Maria Hughes,
Network Enabler, Ageing Better LGBT Hub mariahughes@blgbt.org
or call 0121 643 0821



Birmingham LGBT



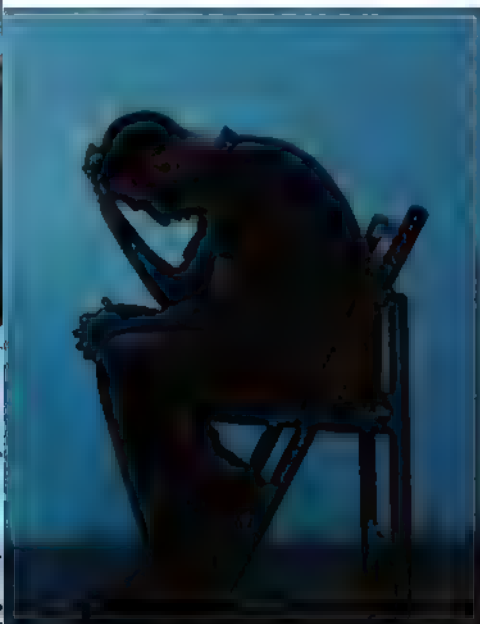
the centre for voluntary action



LOTTERY FUNDED

NEW YEAR IN MIND

A new year is, for many people, a time to reflect on the past and make changes for the future. Often, those changes focus solely on physical improvement, failing to take into account the equally important need for good emotional and mental health.



Losing weight, stopping smoking, getting fit, cutting down on alcohol and saving money are the most frequent promises we make to ourselves at this time of year

Following on from last month's article on physical activity, we thought it might be interesting to look at New Year resolutions through the lens of our mental health. It's an area of our wellbeing that it's easy to neglect.

Mental health

It's estimated that one in six people in the past week have experienced a mental health problem, with mixed anxiety and depression being the most common in the UK. Poor mental health can impact enormously on our physical wellbeing, so it's important to look at our health holistically.

That's easier said than done, of course. We live in a culture where poor mental health is heavily stigmatised, and where we often ignore its early warning signs, staying silent is all too often seen as a sign of strength. Remember, if you're experiencing mental health issues, you are not alone.

Below are a few things you may want to focus on for the coming year. Coupled with the suggestions in last month's article, they add up to a holistic approach to a healthier you.

1. Be 'mindful' and connect with yourself

Mindfulness is a very simple form of meditation. It's a process of bringing your focus to the internal and external experiences in the present moment.

At its simplest, it can be done anywhere and takes only a few minutes, giving you plenty of opportunity to fit it into a busy lifestyle on a regular basis.

Mindfulness has been proven to have numerous benefits for your mental health, effectively decreasing anxiety, stress and depression.

Don't know where to start? There are a range of free mindfulness apps and websites that will take you through the process and give you guided practice. Look around and find the right one for you.

And be sure to stick at it - as with anything, the benefits come from regular practice.

2. Stay connected to others and your community

Why? Evidence tells us that good relationships - whether they be with friends, family, our wider community, or ideally all three - are vitally important for our mental wellbeing.

For some LGBT people, family relationships can be strained or non-existent, so it's important to create constructive relationships in other ways.

Building and maintaining strong and wide social connections can help us feel happier, more secure and can boost our self-esteem.

Some easy goals to stay connected

Have meals with friends and/or colleagues regularly, or visit a local coffee shop to watch the world go by and chat to staff/customers.

Pick up the phone and make a call to a friend. It's all too easy only to text/email. Living in a virtual social world can be isolating.

Be an active citizen and volunteer to help a community organisation, or help to support your local LGBT community.

Find a night a week to try something new, or to attend a social activity or exercise class.

Schedule social activity. Life can be so hectic nowadays that it's easy to become distanced from our social connections. Make an effort to be consistent about socialising.

3. Recognise and manage stress

Stress can be both good and bad.

Let's face it, everyone gets stressed, it's easy to let things get on top of us and pretend that everything is fine.

Actually, having some stress is good for us. Having challenges and difficulties to overcome is what makes us stronger, smarter and better at coping with problems in the future.

But having too much stress can cause a lot of damage to our physical and mental wellbeing.

Be proactive

Firstly, you have to acknowledge that you're stressed. Each of us reacts differently to stress.

Symptoms can manifest in various ways - psychologically, emotionally, physically and behaviourally. It's you who best knows how stress affects you and what symptoms you experience, so reflect on previous periods of stress and write down how you felt, how you reacted and what helped you to overcome it.

Armed with this information, you can learn how to spot warning signs and take action to stop things getting out of control.

Talk about it

Most effectively, you can talk to somebody about it. That sounds like a cliché, but it really is one of the most effective ways to understand a problem and work out what to do about it.

It's not about someone else having all the answers, but often, just talking something through will allow you to process how you're feeling and help you work out what changes you need to make.

4. Get support

Finally, we can all be overwhelmed at times, and you're not alone in having the thoughts and negative feelings you may experience. The best thing to do is to listen to the way you're feeling and then to talk to somebody, whether that be a friend or a professional.

Don't be ashamed, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Birmingham LGBT has a range of services to support you. Visit birminghamlgbt.org.uk for more information.

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www.optimahair.co.uk

#hairloss #wecanhelp

A hair raising experience...

If you're suffering from hair loss, or you've lost it all already, then there may be a solution to return your hair back to it's former glory...

As we get older, almost one thing is for certain - we all start to lose a bit of hair. Whether its going completely bald, having a hair style like a monk, or just a little bit of a receding hairline, it's something we don't necessarily care for.

One solution to counteract this is by visiting a company such as Optima. Located in Birmingham, Optima provide an 'intelligent approach' to hair loss - from diagnosis, scalp treatments, hair systems and much more. With prices starting from just £199.00, there's certainly a solution for everyone. Optima offer fully customisable hair systems, using either human or synthetic hair as you wish, and also provide a whole host of fully trained and experienced hair loss stylists to cut in your new style. Optima say they use 'nothing but the finest materials', as well as using the 'most advanced hair replacement skin technology', and the 'best quality hair'.

So far, it all sounds too good to be true, right? Well no, it isn't. Optima are so passionate about their services and proud of what they can do, they'll welcome you to go and see it all for yourself. If you're sceptical or even slightly interested in finding a solution to your hair loss, then you'll be able to go in and see their hair system with your own eyes. After all its all good seeing a hair system demonstration online, but what you want to know is, what does it feel like? What does it look like? And most importantly, is it going to suit you?

It's easy to find an off the shelf solution, but what you won't get is customised orders specific to your needs, over fifty years experience in hair systems, great after care and on-going support and guidance like you would from Optima.

LASER THERAPY

One treatment option is Laser Therapy. Optima provide regular FDA compliant laser therapy sessions and specifically assigned



hair stimulants, including high potency Minoxidil formula, created by registered Trichologists.

So what is it and what does it do? Well, Laser Therapy increases blood flow to the scalp to maintain the hair follicle which is complimented by Minoxidil, the only scientifically proven treatment for hair loss. Minoxidil works by preventing harmful Dihydrotestosterone (DHT) cutting off circulation to the follicle, halting the miniaturisation process.

Best suited for people with diffused hair loss, people who are starting to experience thinning hair or have a receding hair line, the laser programme can stop further hair loss, as well as thicken your hair and promote new growth.

Now of course, results vary from client to client, and some people see hair growth quickly whilst for others it takes a little longer.

SCALP MICRO PIGMENTATION

Scalp Micro Pigmentation is a great solution for men wanting the shaved head look. It reproduces natural hair follicle growth patterns, camouflages the surface area of the scalp where hair loss has already occurred and facilitates the creation of a new hairline.

The procedure is suitable for all types and stages of hair loss on all skin tones and the treatment process typically takes 9-12 hours to complete, spread over three sessions.

There's so much more to know about these hair loss solutions, and if its something you've been considering recently, get in touch with Birmingham-based Optima by calling 0121 581 0650 or visit optimahair.co.uk

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Futuristic Fitness

Top tech for the fitness fanatic...

01 Strava Run

If you don't want a fitness-tracking smart watch, then a smartphone app such as Strava Run may be all you need. It uses your phone's GPS to plot your route and keep track of your performance over time. If you're competitive with your friends, it will also allow you to compare your performance with other users.

Free
strava.com

02 KualWear Coaching Earphones

If you listen to music whilst working out, then these wireless earphones are for you. Fitted with a biometric sensor, they provide realtime data and ongoing feedback about your performance as you exercise. They connect to your smartphone via Bluetooth, boast a seven-hour battery life and are waterproof up to three metres.

Coming Soon
kualwear.com

03 Garmin Forerunner GPS Running Watch

The Forerunner 620 isn't any old running watch. It's one for the most serious of runners. Using built-in GPS, this watch will help plan a training schedule, track how well you perform, give you advice on how much faster you're capable of going and when to try again.

£223.50
garmin.com

04 Fitbit Max

This smart fitness watch records all the things you'd expect a fitness tracker to record - steps, heart rate, sleep and the number of floors you've climbed. What's more, it features a multi-sport function that tracks specifics relating to different types of workout. It also recognises when you're exercising rather than walking.

From £159.99
fitbit.com

05 Fitbit Aria Wi-Fi Scale

So you've got all the fitness-tracking gadgets? Then you'll need the scales to match. They don't just tell you your weight, they also track weight changes and monitor BMI and body-fat percentage for up to seven people in the house. The data is synced to your smartphone via Wi-Fi, so you can monitor progress anywhere in the world.

£119.99
fitbit.com

06 Gymwatch

If you use weights in the gym, then this is the fitness tracker for you. Designed to be worn whilst using free weights, machines in the gym or whilst doing body weight exercises, the Gymwatch detects if you're doing an exercise properly and offers instant audio feedback to help you adjust your posture, grip and pace.

£129.00
gymwatch.com



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Slim Fit Smart Shirt
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04 Long Sleeve
Jersey Roll Neck Top
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05 Navy Repaired Rip
Skinny Stretch Jeans
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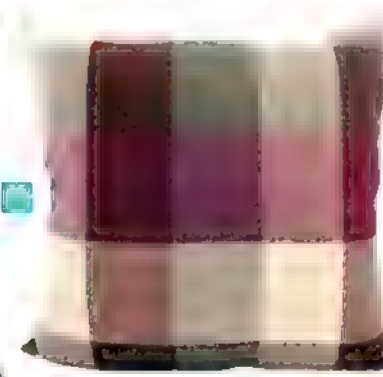
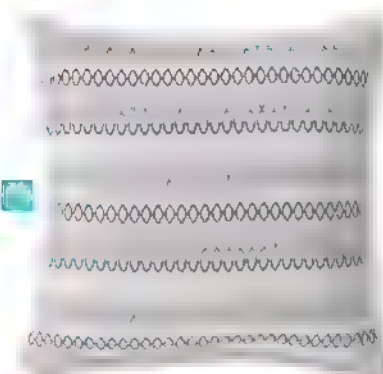
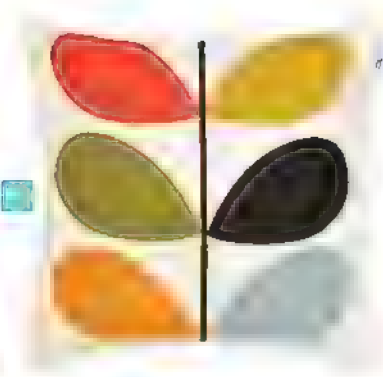
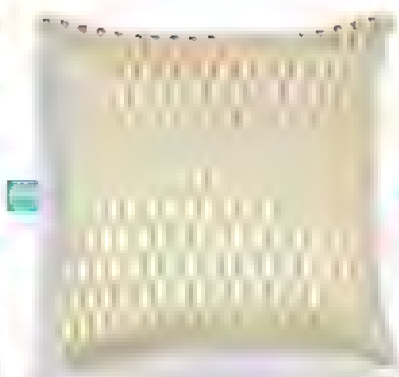
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02 Velvet Oval Cushion

£19.50

marksandspencer.com

03 Oria Kiely Multi-Stem Cushion

£40.00

next.co.uk

04 Let's Stay Home Cushion

£12.00

next.co.uk

05 Tulpantrad Cushion

£12.00

ikea.com

06 Geo Chenille Cushion

£15.00

marksandspencer.com

07 Anchor Knitted Cushion

£12.00

johnlewis.com

08 Gin To My Tonic Cushion

£10.00

dunelm.com

09 Heritage Check Cushion

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dunelm.com

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Yes, we know you're wondering what the catch is

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We've ripped up our subscription rates so that more of you can get the No. 1 gay magazine in the Midlands delivered direct to your front door every month.

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of £2 per issue by debit or credit card!

That's Entertainment!

This month's hot DVD, music and book releases...

DVD LAZY EYE

TLA Releasing's latest comedy-drama, written and directed by Tim Kirkman, tells the story of a young graphic designer called Dean (Lucas Near-Verbrugghe). After experiencing problems with his eyesight, Dean is unexpectedly contacted by his former love interest, Alex (Aaron Costa Ganis), who hopes he can rekindle their relationship. When the two rendezvous at a quiet vacation house, secrets from their past resurface and threaten to reshape their lives.

Released Monday 16 January

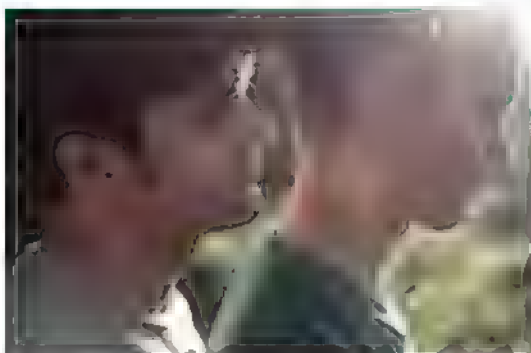


DVD FERAL

Feral is a new gay series following a Memphis-based group of friends as they deal with the challenges of love, depression, loss, and friendship. The show picks up where hit gay lifestyle series Looking left off. It tells the story of best

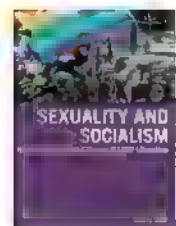
friends Billy and Daniel, faced with a conflict when they're forced to kick out their roommate, Jordan. With finding a new gay or gay-friendly roommate proving to be no easy task, they end up relying on the help of their fun and whimsical friend Emily, who introduces them to a mysterious new guy in town.

Released Monday 30 January



BOOK SEXUALITY AND SOCIALISM

by Sherry Wolf



Sexuality And Socialism is an accessible analysis of many of the most challenging questions relating to full equality for LGBT people. The book delivers essays on the roots of LGBT oppression, the construction of sexual and gender identities, the history of the gay movement, and how to unite the oppressed and exploited to win sexual liberation for all. Author Sherry Wolf analyses different theories about oppression - including those of Marxism, postmodernism, identity politics and queer theory - and challenges myths about genes, gender, and sexuality.

Released Sunday 15 January

CLASSIC HOUSE

by Pete Tong

PETE TONG

WITH THE HERITAGE ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTED BY JULES BUCKLEY



CLASSIC HOUSE

In early 2015, an idea to marry the world's most iconic classical music event - the BBC Proms - with Britain's greatest electronic dance music icon - Pete Tong - was proposed.

Eyebrows were raised and questions were asked. Could it work?

Fast forward to July 2015, in the hallowed surroundings of the Royal Albert Hall, as the string section of the Heritage Orchestra played the opening bars of Fatboy Slim's Right Here Right Now.

Any doubts about the project were quickly dispelled; as the audience rose to their feet, a new movement in dance music was born. Breaking BBC iPlayer records and racking up 500,000 views via YouTube in the first week, the Ibiza Prom inspired a younger generation to engage with orchestral music.

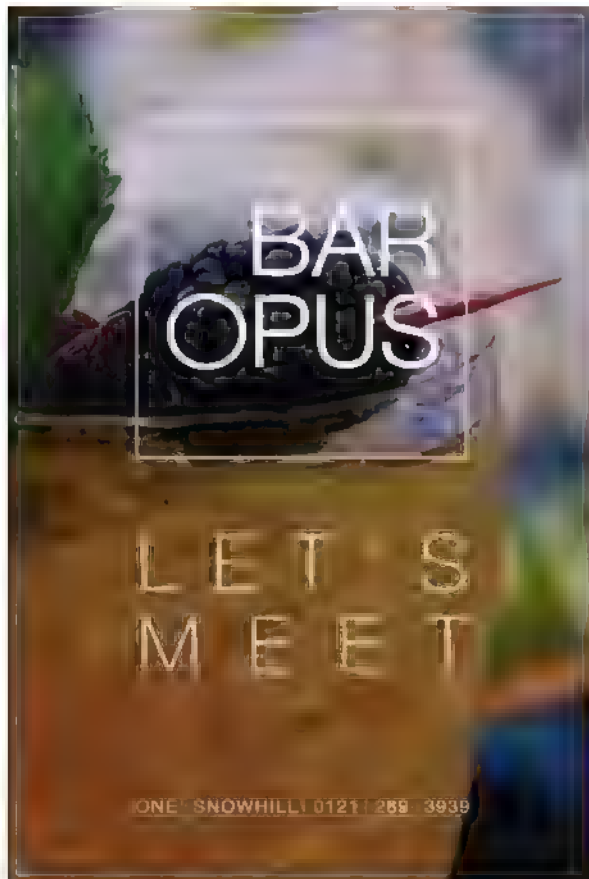
It also rekindled the passions of the rave generation...

December 2016 saw the show born again, with sold-out performances taking place at London's O2, Manchester Arena and Birmingham's Genting Arena.

Working alongside Pete, conductor Jules Buckley, orchestra director Chris Wheeler and producer Mark Ralph have recorded iconic versions of classic tracks such as Faithless's Insomnia, The Shapeshifters' Lola's Theme and Energy 52's Café Del Mar.

A union of orchestral music and iconic dance tracks, Pete Tong's Classic House is another bold, brilliant move from one of the most influential figures in dance music today.

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NADIYA HUSSAIN**
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**TOM KERRIDGE'S
DOPAMINE DIET**
MON 23 JANUARY 2017
TOWN HALL



**DEAN STRANG AND
JERRY BUTING:
FROM MAKING
A MURDERER**
TUE 24 JANUARY 2017
TOWN HALL



MEXRRISSEY
SUN 29 JANUARY 2017
TOWN HALL



**JOHN MALKOVICH IN
JUST CALL ME GOD:
THE FINAL SPEECH
OF A DICTATOR**
TUE 21 MARCH 2017
SYMPHONY HALL

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ZONE hotlist

THIS MONTH'S HOT EVENTS & THINGS TO SEE AND DO



1 STRICTLY COME DANCING LIVE TOUR

**Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Fri 20 -
Sun 22 January**

The Strictly Come Dancing Live UK tour will be celebrating 10 years on the road when it waltzes into Birmingham this month.

The 2017 edition of the show sees Len Goodman and Craig Revel Horwood joined on the judging panel by the 2006 winner of the TV series, professional dancer Karen Hardy. Countryfile's Anita Rani, a semi-finalist in the 2015 series and a contestant on last year's live tour, makes her debut as the show's host.

"The live tour always has such a great atmosphere," says Len Goodman, "and this 10th tour will definitely be one to remember, especially as it comes as I complete my final year on the TV series as head judge. Rest assured, audiences, this tour will be a 10 from Len!"

Taking to the dancefloor this year are, among others, presenter and singer Louise Redknapp, model Daisy Lowe, actress Lesley Joseph, sports presenter Ore Oduba, actor Danny Mac and former shadow chancellor Ed Balls

2 PAUL SINHA

**The Bramall, Birmingham,
Thurs 19 January**

A gay Asian doctor turned funnyman, Paul Sinha has enjoyed great success at the Edinburgh Festival

He's also a clever and articulate contributor to numerous radio and television shows, perhaps most notably ITV's award-winning quiz series, *The Chase*, where he's been one of the regular 'Chasers' since 2011.

Alongside his stand-up, Paul has also carved out a further career for himself as a professional quizzier, attaining grandmaster status a couple of years ago and reaching a career-high UK ranking in 2015.

His stand-up routines often include anecdotes and one-liners about gay dating, including: "I've recently downloaded a new smartphone app to give me the location for all the single, middle-aged men in my area. It's called Uber."





3

EVITA

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tue 31 January - Sat 4 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tue 3 - Sat 31 May

Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's third major collaboration opened to rave reviews way back in the late 1970s. It has since garnered a reputation as one of the greatest musicals ever to grace West End and Broadway stages.

Telling the real-life story of Eva Peron, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Peron, the show is packed to the rafters with memorable numbers, including On This Night, O My Thousand Stars, Buenos Aires, You Must Love Me, Another Suitcase In Another Hall and, of course, the classic Don't Cry For Me Argentina.

Casting is yet to be confirmed.

4

4200 WORTHINGTON

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 15 - Fri 20 January; Genting Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 16 February; Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Sun 26 Feb

A fella who's had no trouble whatsoever getting his boat race on the goggle-box, Jack Whitehall's highly animated style of delivery is developing all the time, as is his repertoire of material. Subject matter has ranged from his father's desperate attempts to get quoted in his show, to his 2010 coparenting shame, as exposed at the time by the News Of The World.

As for his jokes, previous chuckle-a-muscle exercises have included: "I've never laughed a woman into bed, but I've laughed one out of bed many times," and "I'm posh, but I don't take any stick for it. It's like I always say, sticks and stones may break my bones, but I ^{never} ^{never} it, I'm with Bupa."



5

GREASE

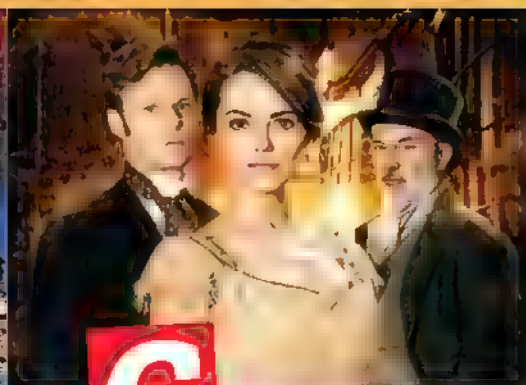
Curve, Leicester, Until Sat 14 January

Grease is the word this Christmas as Nikolai

Foster directs Curve's new production of the smash-hit musical.

After a whirlwind summer romance, leather-clad greaser Danny and glammed-out Sandy are unexpectedly reunited when she transfers to Rydell High for senior year.

But can they survive the trials and tribulations of teenage life...and find true love once more?



6

GASLIGHT

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,
Fri 8 - Sat 14 January

Patrick Hamilton's play comes with a royal seal of approval, with both King George and Queen Elizabeth having insisted on seeing it during its hugely successful West End run. Gaslight's reputation was further secured by its three-plus years on Broadway, during which period it was performed an impressive 1,295 times. All of which should nicely whet the appetite for this latest version.

Bella Manningham's life is a fun-free zone. Feeling trapped in her gloomy home, she sits alone each night dreading the sound of footsteps from locked and empty rooms, and waiting for the gaslight to dim.

When a retired detective arrives one evening with a terrifying tale to tell, Bella must work out whether her visitor is really there to help, or if she's about to descend into a pit of madness from which there can be no return.

Kara Tointon, Rupert Young and Keith Allen star

8

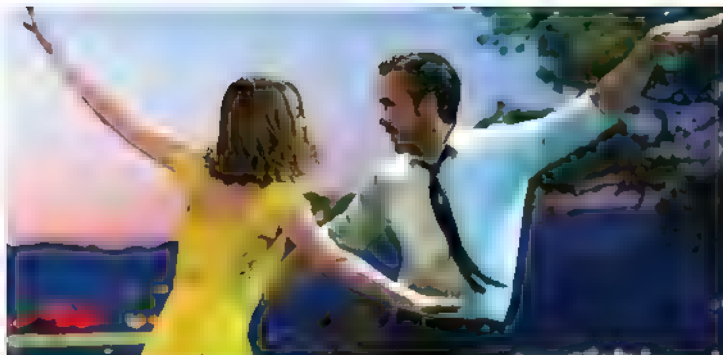
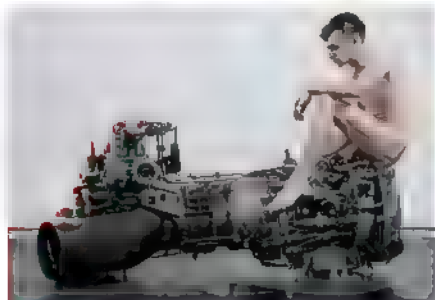
ROGER HIORNS

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham,
Until Sun 5 March

Roger Hiorns transforms materials and readymades in order to focus on various aspects of modern life

often through current affairs

His work to date has involved growing vast amounts of copper sulphate crystals on objects ranging from car engines to domestic interiors. He's also created paintings made from brain matter, injected jet engines with anti-depressant drugs to effect a robotic nervous system, and produced a video work in which choristers of Birmingham's St Philip's Cathedral sing Evensong while lying on their backs on the floor of the nave.



7 LA LA LAND

Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone, John Legend, Rosemarie DeWitt, JK Simmons, Finn Wittrock, Tom Everett Scott

Directed by Damien Chazelle (USA)

At the date of going to press, La La Land is the movie to beat at the 2017 Oscars – particularly for best picture, best actor, best actress and best director (Damien Chazelle). It's what insiders say has 'The Artist' vote – an original that has the finesse to out-gum all the portentous, well-

meaning dramas. Chazelle's last film, the suspenseful and distinctive Whiplash, won an Oscar for best supporting actor (J.K. Simmons). But La La Land is a musical, and a romantic musical at that. Emma Stone plays an aspiring actress who meets a jazz pianist (Ryan Gosling) in Los Angeles (hence the title) and they fall in love. It's as simple as that. Well, not quite. The chemistry between the stars was as given as they'd previously played lovers in Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) and Gangster Squad (2013).

Released Fri 13 January



9

TATTOO FREEZE

The International Centre, Telford, Sun 29 January

Following on from the success of previous shows, this specialist one-day event offers members of the general public the chance to get themselves tattooed by one (or more!) of the 200 talented tattooists who'll be in attendance.

Past shows have featured some of the world's greatest graffiti artists, BMX and skateboard champions, shopping stalls, children's activities, national roller derby tournaments and ice sculpture demonstrations and workshops.



WIN! A pair of tickets to see Bianca Del Rio in Birmingham

Bianca Del Rio is back with a bang and will be slaying her stuff at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Monday 6 February!

The Season 6 winner of RuPaul's Drag Race and self-professed 'crown in a gown', Bianca Del Rio brings her new stand-up show, Not Today Satan, to the UK for the first time ever!

The hilariously hateful comic known as Bianca Del Rio is known for her foul mouth and unapologetic humour, and to celebrate that fact, we've got two tickets to her show at Symphony Hall to give away to one lucky reader!

To enter this amazing competition, all you need to do is visit midlandszone.co.uk and answer this simple question

Which season of RuPaul's Race did Bianca Del Rio win?

- A) Season One
- B) Season Five
- C) Season Six

Competition ends 23.59 on 28 January 2015. Winner to be announced on 29 January 2015.

RAYMOND GUBBAY presents

ANTON & ERIN

SWING TIME

Sensational new choreography, sparkling costumes and a show band performing timeless music.

I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT
I GOT RHYTHM • MOONDANCE
I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING
GUYS AND DOLLS • LE JAZZ HOT
STRIKE UP THE BAND

Richard Balcombe conductor
Lance Ellington star vocalist
Six world class Ensemble Dancers
Plus the full 25 piece London Concert Orchestra

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WHAT'S ON IN YOUR LOCAL GAY VENUES

OUT

JANUARY 2017



5 After
Midnight
come to the
midlands!



DJ PAUL MORRELL

GETS THE BOYS OF BRUM
PARTYING AT XXI

CABARET FUN IN BRUM

Fun-filled cabaret magic hits
Birmingham's gay village!

CHARLIE HIDES

Much-loved impressionist set
to star at Birmingham bar

LOFTY AMBITIONS

Great first month for The Loft
and its all-new vintage look



5 AFTER MIDNIGHT

SATURDAY 21ST JAN

THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB BIRMINGHAM

WWW.NIGHTINGALECLUB.CO.UK

TICKETS FROM THETICKETSELLERS.CO.UK

ESSEX HOUSE, KENT STREET / BIRMINGHAM / B5 6RD - 0121 622 1100
KF THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB @NIGHTINGALECLUB THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB

Birmingham gets set for X Factor stars **5 AFTER MIDNIGHT!**



So the talent show powerhouse that is The X Factor may have left our telly for another year, but don't panic, because it's not over yet.

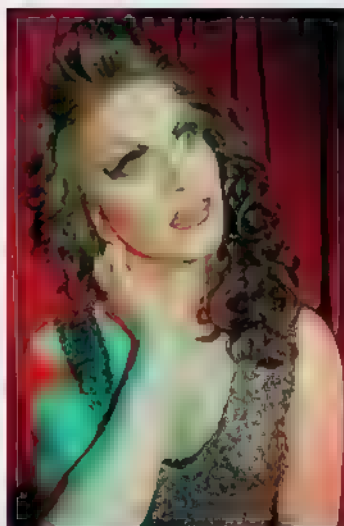
That's right, because on Saturday 21 January, third-place X Factor runners-up, 5 After Midnight are taking to the stage at popular gay venue, The Nightingale. If you can't make the late show in Birmingham, then head to Shrewsbury live music venue The Buttermarket where the boys will be performing an early show.

The trio, which consist of Kieran, Jordan and Nathan, only formed five weeks prior to their audition. Not bad going considering they ended up finishing third!

They stormed their audition with Drake's One Dance - and ended up finishing just behind Saara Aalto and eventual winner Matt Terry.

THE BUTTERMARKET - SHREWSBURY & THE NIGHTINGALE BIRMINGHAM

FRIDAY NIGHT CABARET every week at popular Birmingham bar



If you're out on a Friday night and looking for great cabaret to enjoy, look no further than Birmingham's Village Inn.

Kicking off the venue's January line-up is Lola Lasagne on Friday the 6th. The following week sees Miss Marty dropping in, followed by Kelly Wilde the week after. Friday the 27th sees the one and only Sandra heading back to the venue, to see you into February!

THE VILLAGE INN - BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL

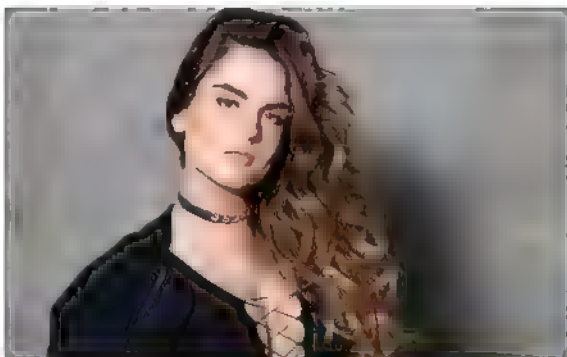
Noughties pop star **JOJO** appears at the Nightingale for New Year's Eve Re-run

There's no denying that New Year's Eve is essentially just another day in the calendar - but boy do we love the party that goes with it!

That's why we're buzzing that Birmingham's Nightingale Club has Noughties pop star JoJo -

remember her most famous tune, Leave (Get Out)? - headlining their New Year's Eve Re-run on Saturday 28 January. Check it out. We'll certainly be there - right on the front row!

THE NIGHTINGALE - BIRMINGHAM



XXL BIRMINGHAM brings all the boys (and bears) to the yard...

Men-only club night XXL returns to Birmingham this month - and it promises to be as good as ever!

The award-winning club night, taking place on the third Friday of every month (20 January), features resident DJ Paul Morrell playing the biggest hits and remixes to get the

dancefloor packed

Oh, and if you fancy making your night out that little bit hotter, don't forget there's a dark room upstairs!

If you've never been before, why not check it out this month?

THE CORE - BIRMINGHAM



January

2 9 16 23 30

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday - All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
THE LOFT LOUNGE

MINISTRY OF POUND - with DJ Mike Emery from 9pm. Selected drinks £1. Open until 2am.
MISSING BAR

BINGO - Bingo with Queeny
THE VILLAGE INN

SUGAR RUSH £2 entry
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

MONDAY MADNESS
offers with DJ Matt Hap

BAR JESTER

BAR JESTER

BAR JESTER

POUNDED

Pounded from 6pm onwards £1

SANDROCCA
SIDEWALK

FABULOUS Featuring resident DJ Col, playing the best in chart hits.

camp tunes and more Live cabaret every 1st Monday of the month. **Mon 2 January** - Miss Penny. Free admission before mid night and just £3 after
C:21, SHREWSBURY

THE MONDAY CLUB - 9pm-5am - Student night. Everything is £2 (Shots £1) with DJ Lee Edward
GORGEOUS, WOLVERHAMPTON

CHILL NIGHT with Karaoke
THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

GET THE PARTY STARTED

GOSSIP, STOKE ON TRENT

STUDENT NIGHT Free
all drinks £1.00 before 11pm
PINK, STOKE ON TRENT

2 TILL 2

for a quiet drink in a friendly atmosphere

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

DISCO 7pm-midnight
NEW FORESTERS, NOTTINGHAM

TUESDAY

January

3 10 17 24 31

BIRMINGHAM

90'S NIGHT - Every Tuesday night 10.30pm-3am
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday - All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
THE LOFT LOUNGE

SCREAM STAR SUPERSTAR - With your host karaoke temptress. Gavina. Party starts at 9pm till late
MISSING BAR

OPEN YOUR SNATCH - Songs, Games & Prizes with Miss Penny
THE VILLAGE INN



TUNE UP TUESDAY Fun & Games with Baby G. Happy Hour until 2am. Happy Hour until 2am. Open 10pm-late
BAR JESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

BIG TUESDAY NIGHT PARTY Quids in. Drinks from £1. 2 rooms of

THE LION BAR & CLUB, WALSALL

CAMP QUIZ with free buffet. Our
THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

DIVERSITY W

VELVET, WORCESTER

FLAUNT A mist c

BREWERY TAP, WORCESTER

SKYE'S PARTY NIGHT Du d

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

2 TILL 2

for a quiet drink in

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

CHILL OUT NIGHT F

NEW FORESTERS, NOTTINGHAM

GAMES NIGHT

Nintendo Wii from 8pm
DOVER CASTLE, LEICESTER

January

4 11 18 25

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday - All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
THE LOFT LOUNGE

2 GOOD 2 MISS Drinks from just £2 with DJ Mike Emery. **MISSING BAR**

KILLER KARAOKE - with Charlotte the Harlot
THE VILLAGE INN

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS Shak

SIDEWALK

DADDY'S DEALS AND FREE POOL

THE FOX

BAR JESTER

BAR JESTER

BAR JESTER

WEDNESDAY LINE Line C

THE WELLINGTON

WEST MIDLANDS

DISCO & DJ w

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

STUDENT CLUB NIGHT

THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

WACKY WEDNESDAYS Karaoke

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

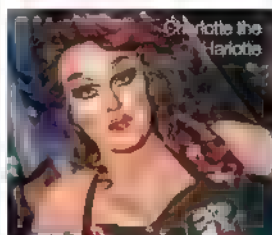
EAST MIDLANDS

KARAOKE 9pm to 3am £

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

GAMES NIGHT Free Pool 1on

NEW FORESTERS, NOTTINGHAM



January

6 12 19 26

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday - All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
THE LOFT LOUNGE

CULT - Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

1 < 3 THE 90S - From 8pm with DJ Dan. Doors open from 2pm.
EDEN

CHARLIE HIDES - Thurs 26 January - Live cabaret with the one and only Charlie Hides
MISSING BAR

POUNDED - £5 entry. Drinks from a £1. DJ Corey playing chart and dance on whilst Miss Marty and DJ Craig with all the pop and cheese on the middle floor
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

TANGO THURSDAYS - with Marty. Happy Hour 12noon-2am
THE VILLAGE INN

THROWBACK THURSDAY £1.20 bombs and great music!
MISSING BAR

DROP THE BOMB

SIDEWALK

SHOT EXCHANGE Drinks prices do
it's a great market

THE CORE

WEST MIDLANDS

12.01 - with DJ James Levett. Open from midnight until 5am with drinks from £1
GORGEOUS, WOLVES

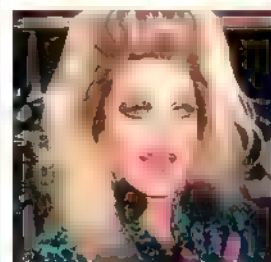
DISCO & DJ A night of fun with

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON



THE BIGGEST GAY

MONDAY NIGHT IN THE MIDLANDS!



MON 2ND JAN
MISS PENNY



MON 6TH FEB
FANNY BURNS

**FREE
ENTRY
BEFORE
MIDNIGHT!**
10PM-3AM

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BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday - All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two **THE LOFT LOUNGE**

ALL DAY EVERY DAY PRICES DJ Pam takes over the weekend by playing the best of club classics, house, R&B and all your favourites. Enjoy all day every day prices too! **SEAWALK**

BIG GAY FRIDAY - Party anthems all night long with Missing's DJ James. Open until the early hours. **MIDNIGHT BAR**

SING STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE - with DJ Nikk. **EVERY BAR**

FREAKY FRIDAY - Big name cabaret at midnight. Open until 6am. **Fri 6 Jan** - Loia Lasagne. **Fri 13 Jan** - Miss Marty. **Fri 20 Jan** - Kelly Wilde. **Fri 27 Jan** - Sandra. **THE VILLAGE INN**

INFUSION - Free Entry. Absolute Anthems and Floor Fillers with DJ Corey. Drinks from £2. £2 entry. **NIGHTINGALE CLUB**

KICK START - Kick start the weekend from 9pm to the early hours. Hosted by James. **MIDNIGHT BAR**

L&R - With Charlotte the Harlot. Open until 6am every Friday. **THE VILLAGE INN**

MIDSBARS - **Fri 20 January** - A night for the bear community, admirers and friends. **EVERY BAR**

OLD SKOOL GARAGE - The first Friday of the month sees the Nightingale go back in time, playing some of the best in old skool garage. A night not to be missed. **NIGHTINGALE CLUB**

SAATHI - **Fri 27 January** - Every last Friday monthly. South Asian Gay and Lesbian club night. Bollywood and Bhangra. **NIGHTINGALE CLUB**

SING STAR SUPERSTAR with DJ Nikk. every Friday - your chance to win cash. **EVERY BAR**

VINTAGE FRIDAYS - a night of soul, funk, rock, motown, Northern Soul and all the classic favourites. **THE LOFT LOUNGE**

XXL - **Fri 20 January** - Men only night with DJ Paul Morrell. Early Bear offers until 11pm. Every 3rd Friday of each month. **THE CORE CLUB**

EVERY BAR

CLUB CHIC

KARAOKE

THE FOX

EVERY BAR

BAR JESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

THANK FUNK ITS FRIDAY

Gorgeous residents spinning house and classics. 12am - 6am. **GORGEOUS CLUB, WOLVERHAMPTON**

BANG

THE LION, WALSALL

THE GREENHOUSE, DARLSTON

THE GREENHOUSE, DARLSTON

OLIVE NIGHT

THE THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

PINK QUARRY ROAD

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

FRIDAY SOCIAL with DJ Paul

THE BELL, STOURBRIDGE

EVERY BAR

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

STAY THE WEEKEND

PINK, STOKE ON TRENT

EVERY BAR

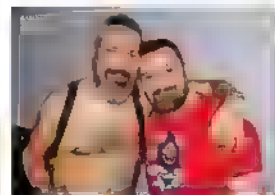
BREWERY TAP, WORCESTER

EAST MIDLANDS

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

CLUB NIGHT with DJ

HELSINKI, LEICESTER



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ZONE

BIANCA DEL RIO

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MARK AMES
PRESENTS



THE BIGGER BETTER
BOLDER BEARS CLUB

XXL BIRMINGHAM
20th JANUARY

10PM - 4AM £5 ENTRY

THE CORE CLUB
135 SHERLOCK ST, BIRMINGHAM B5 6NB

XXL-LONDON.COM

LIVE PERFORMANCES

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GREET
TICKETS
AVAILABLE

SAARA AALTO

SAT 14 JAN 8PM

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GIG. UNDER 14's MUST
BE ACCOMPANIED BY
AN ADULT

SUPPORT ACTS TO
BE ANNOUNCED

X FACTOR FINALISTS LIVE

SAT 21 JAN 8PM

VIP
MEET &
GREET
TICKETS
AVAILABLE

5 AFTER MIDNIGHT

NO AGE RESTRICTION
GIG. UNDER 14's MUST
BE ACCOMPANIED BY
AN ADULT

SUPPORT ACTS TO
BE ANNOUNCED

THE BUTTERMARKET
SHREWSBURY

TICKETS ON SALE NOW AT
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BIRMINGHAM

80S HITS - with DJ Dan from 2am it's back to the 80s
THE BAR

THE ATTIC - Available for hire. Call the venue for more info 0121 622 4256
THE ATTIC

5 AFTER MIDNIGHT - Sat 21 January - Live PA from third-place X Factor runners-up 5 After Midnight
THE NIGHTINGALE

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT - Over 2 floors, 3 DUs. Open til 8am. With DJ Lotty & DJ Richard Moon. With DJ Tonie in The Village Underground.
THE VILLAGE INN

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT - Every Saturday, with loads of drinks promotions.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

NYE RE-RUN - Sat 26 January - Relive the whole fun that was NYE all over again, as The Nightingale play host to naughties pop icon JoJo in their annual NYE Re-run.
THE NIGHTINGALE

CULT - Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

KARAOKE & COCKTAILS - in The Attic, plus music from across the decades.
MISSING

L&R - With Charlotte the Harlot. Open until 8am every Saturday
THE VILLAGE INN

LISA Q JONES - Sat 7 January - A live cabaret show from the cousin of Laquisha Jones. Lisa Q Jones. Free entry!
THE BAR

SATURDAY SESSIONS - With DJ Simon Baker from 8pm.
THE LOFT LOUNGE

SATURS-FACTION - Welcome in the weekend with resident DJ, playing the best of everything
THE BAR

SWAGGERLICIOUS - Every Saturday night (Room 4)
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

CABARET DOUBLE - Sat 28 January - Double cabaret performance from Mary Mac and Ruby Murry
THE BAR

YOUR DISCO NEEDS YOU - featuring the biggest remixes, absolute anthems, dance classics, disco, house and commercial with your host Twiggy!
THE BAR

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

CLUB CHIC

FABULOUS SATURDAYS

THE CORE CLUB

DJ PARTY NIGHT

THE FOX

#JUST SAYING

BAR JESTER

KARAOKE

THE WELLINGTON

CLUB NIGHT

THE THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

THE SATURDAY NIGHT OUT

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

INCLUSION

THE BEL, STOURBRIDGE

NOT TO MISS

PINK, STOKE ON TRENT

WEEKLY CABARET

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

EAST MIDLANDS

BIG WEEKEND PARTY NIGHT

BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

CLUB NIGHT

MELBURN, LEICESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

STRAWBERRY SATURDAYS - Wolverhampton's biggest night out with DJ Jamie Levett
GORGEOUS, WOLVERHAMPTON

BIG NIGHT OUT

THE LION, WALSALL

1 8 15 22 29 January

BIRMINGHAM

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS - Sunday to Friday. All day & night. Wind down after work with a cocktail or two
THE LOFT LOUNGE

THE STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE - with DJ Nikki. Every Sunday
THE BAR

LOCAL CABARET - with Charlotte the Harlot. Showcasing the best of the Midlands cabaret circuit every Sunday
THE VILLAGE INN

MISS PENNY'S SUPERSIZE SUNDAYS - Cabaret every Sunday hosted by the one and only Miss Penny on stage at 8.30pm and 10.30pm
THE BAR



NEW FOOD MENU

SIDEWALK

CHILL OUT

THE FOX

STRAWBERRY SATURDAYS

BAR JESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

MARTY'S PARTY 9pm-4am - Fun & Games, Karaoke, Prizes and all round mayhem. Drinks from £2
GORGEOUS, WOLVERHAMPTON

THE PARTY LOUNGE

LION BAR & CLUB, WALSALL

KARAOKE & DJ

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

RANDOM PARTY NIGHT

THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

EAST MIDLANDS

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

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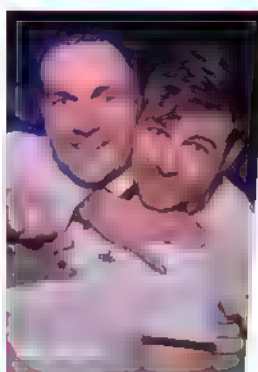
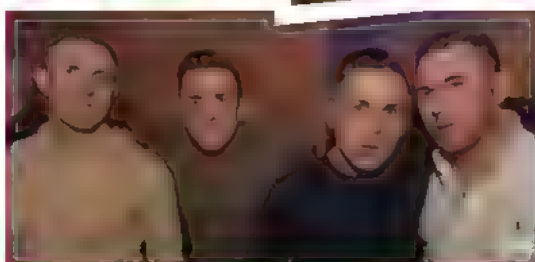
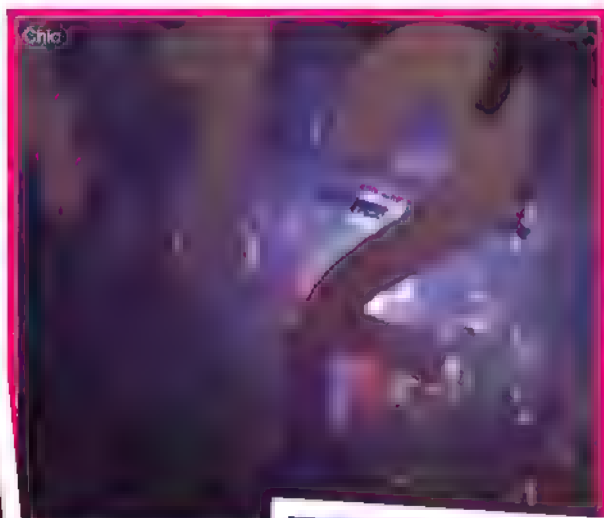
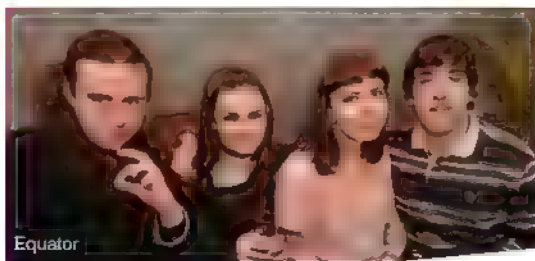
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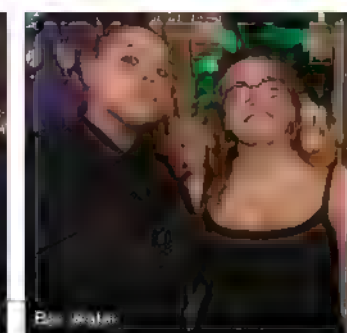
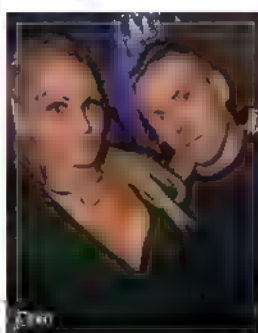
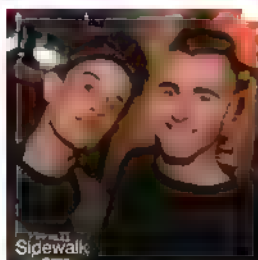
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HIV Service
BHS Healthcare Trust

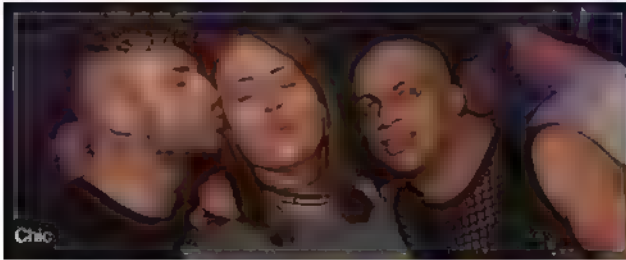
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Out and about in **Birmingham's Gay Village!**

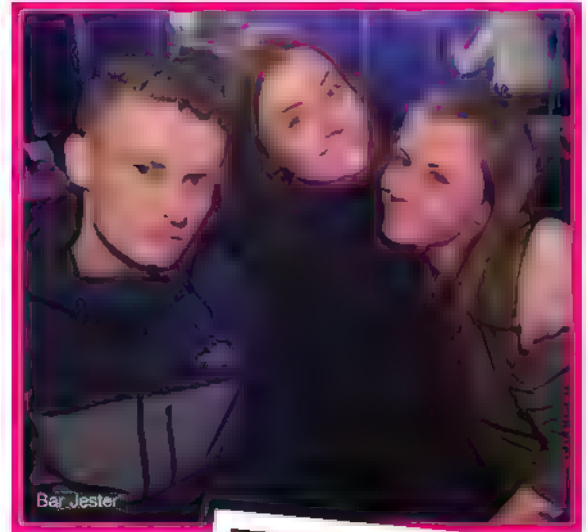


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Chic



Bar Jester



Bar Jester



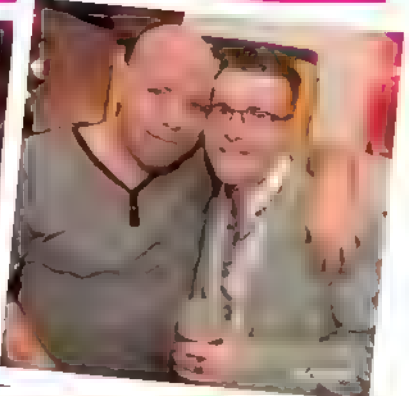
Slowwalk



Slowwalk



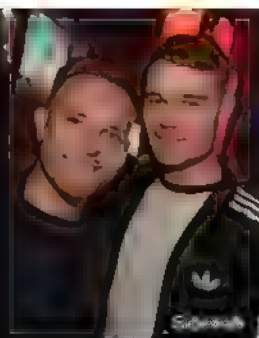
Chic



Bar Jester



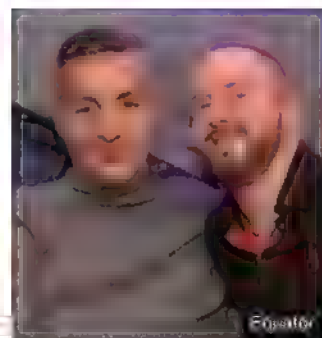
Bar Jester



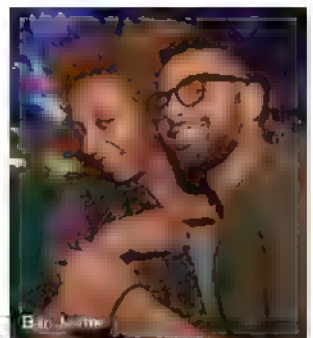
Slowwalk



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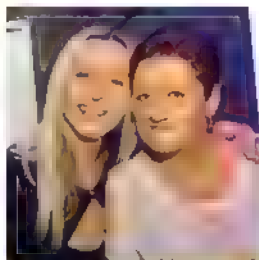
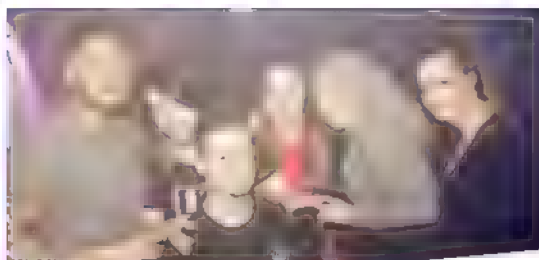
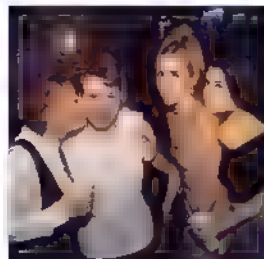
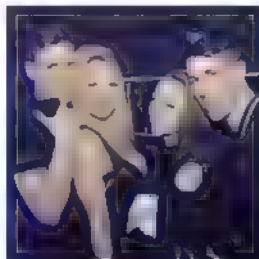
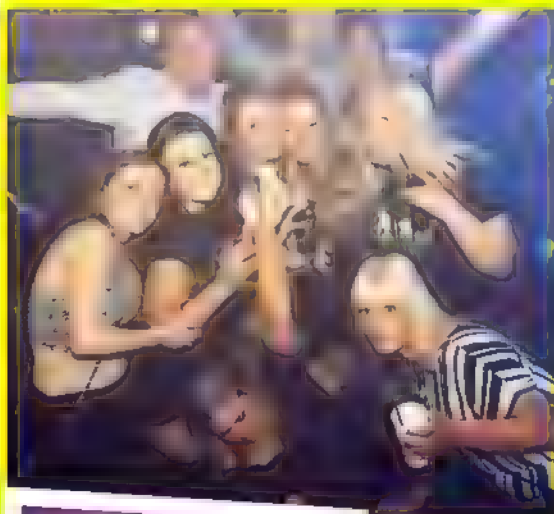


Equator

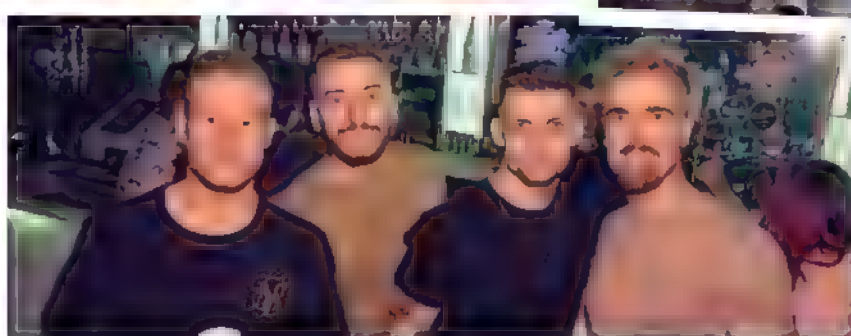
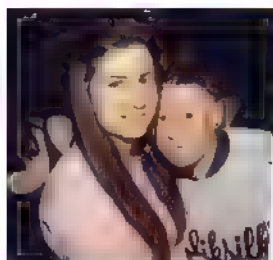


Bar Jester

Gorgeous is always a great night out in Wolves!



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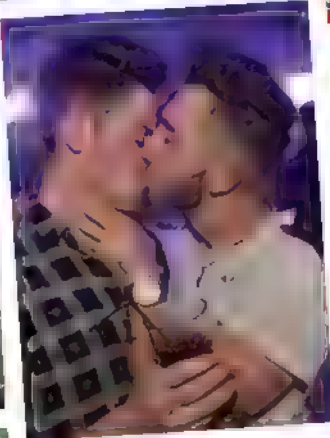
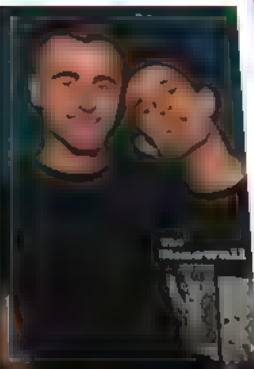
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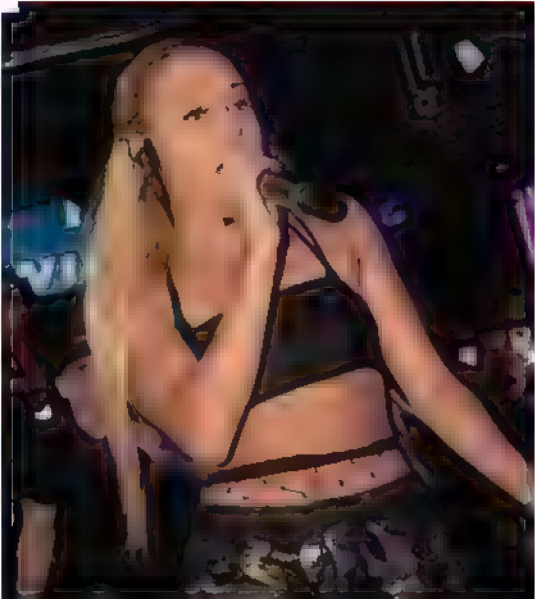
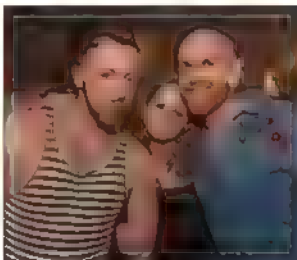
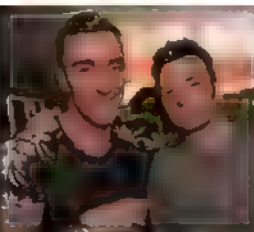
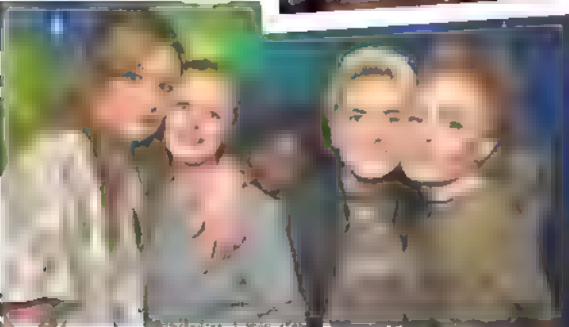
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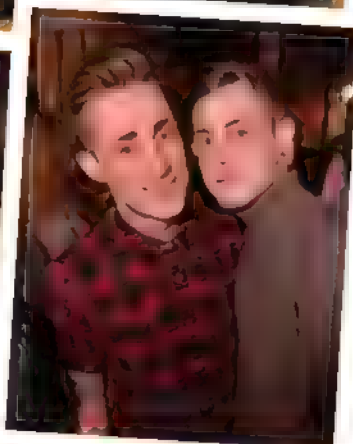
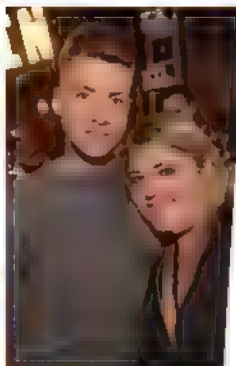
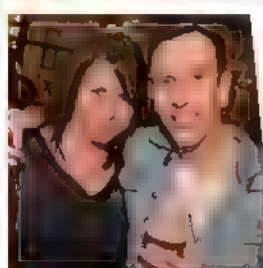
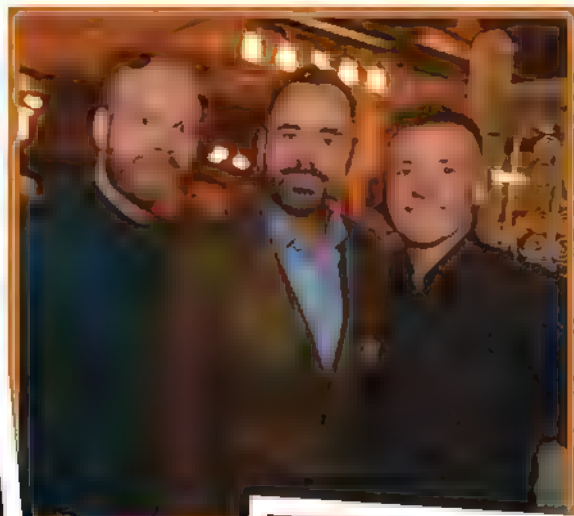
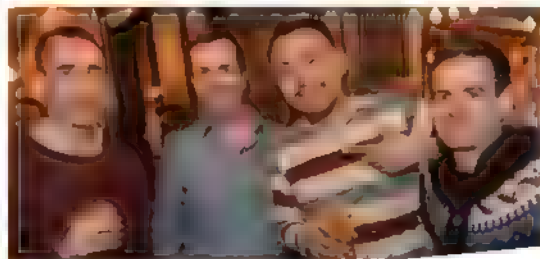
Imani gets the crowd going at **The Nightingale!**



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The Loft: All-new bar is the talk of the gay scene!

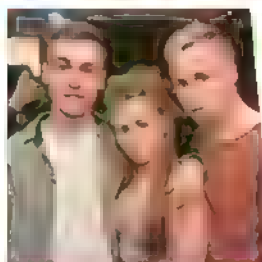
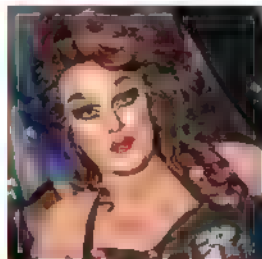
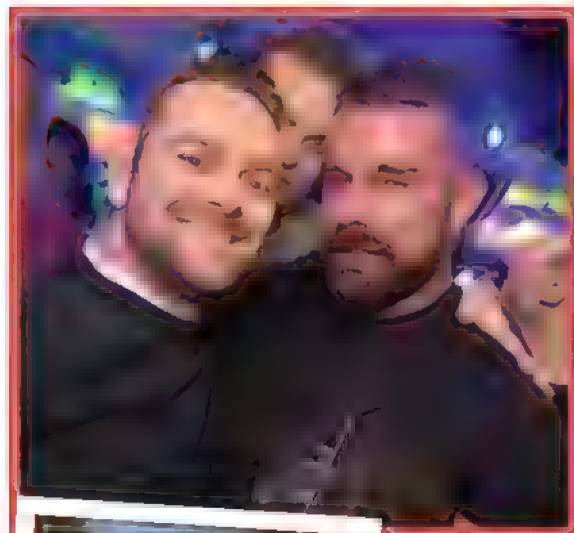


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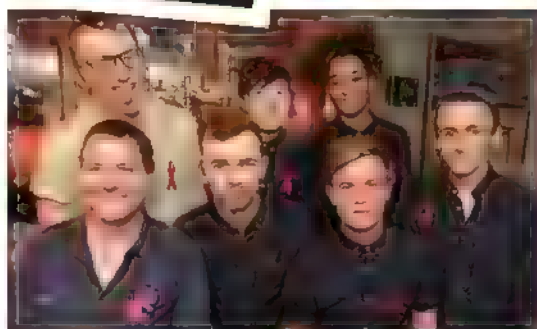
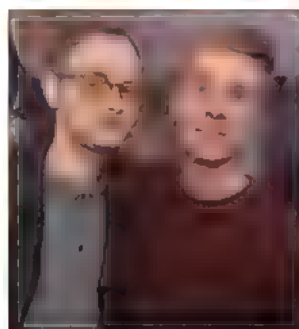


Pictures by Laura Byrne

The Village Inn is a great place to party until dawn!



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2017

THE 2017

LOLA LASAGNE

THE 2017

MISS MARY

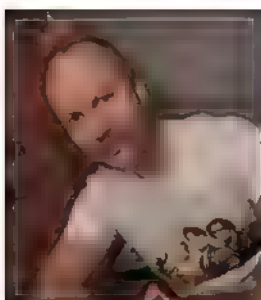
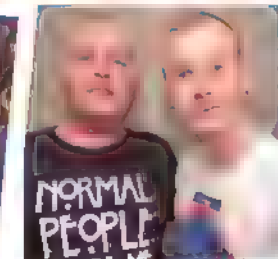
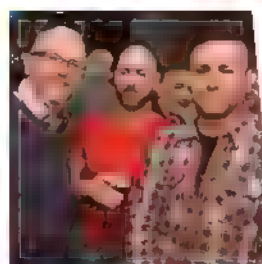
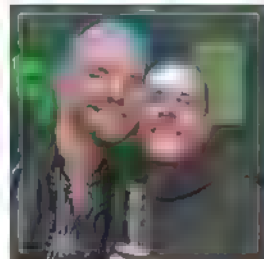
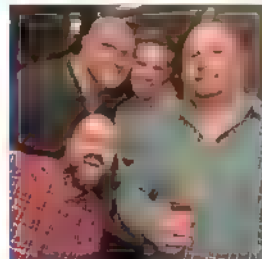
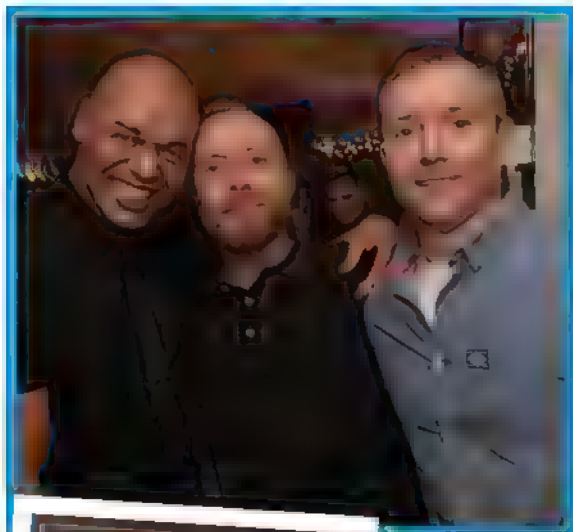
THE 2017

KITTY WILDE

SANDRA

THE VILLAGE INN

Enjoy a great night out at Birmingham's **Eden Bar!**



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January Entertainment

eden

Sat
7th

Lisa Q Jones



Fri
20th

Mids Bears

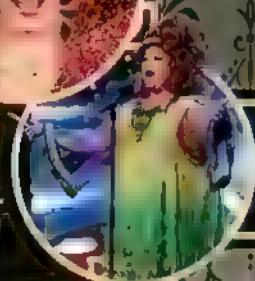
Thur
26th

Charlie Hides



Sat
28th

Mary Mac
Ruby Murry



Every Fri

DJ Nikki
Karaoke & Disco

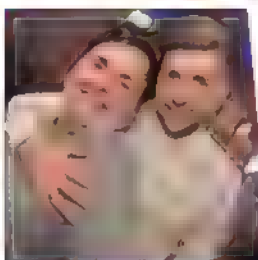
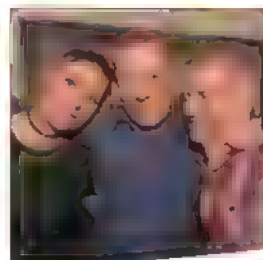
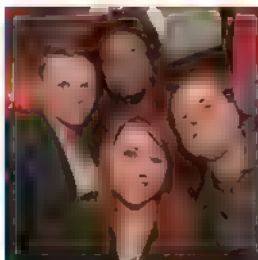
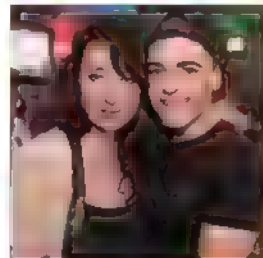
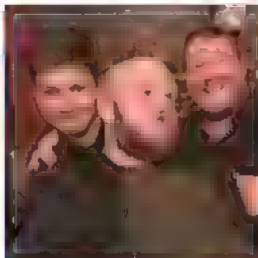
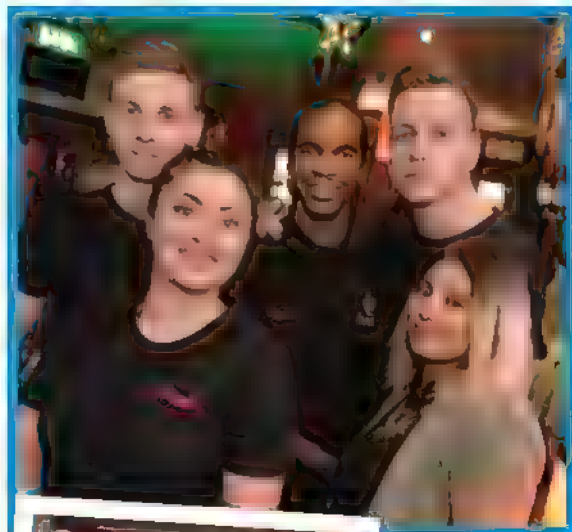
Every Sat

DJ Dan
Charts & 80's from 2am

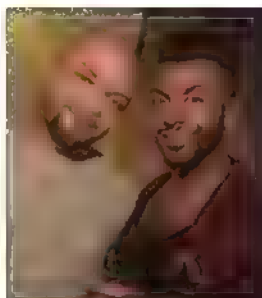
Every Sun

DJ Nikki
Karaoke & Disco

Missing: Brum's party bar is a fantastic night out!



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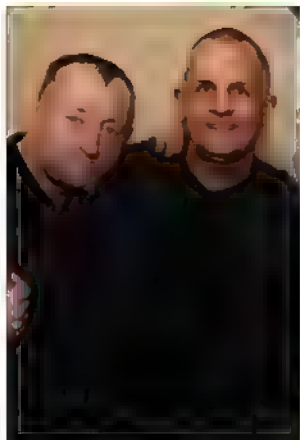
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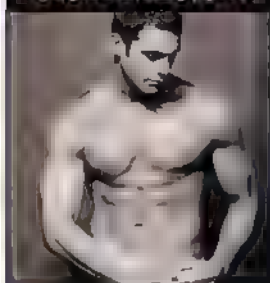
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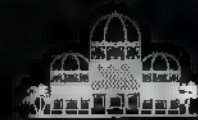
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THE LIFE OF A THIRTYSOMETHING GAY by Stephen Spinks

In the presence of angels

I had done it again! Yes, again! Once more I found myself in the arms of a beautiful bear whose firm, dark, hairy chest, beefy arms and piercing blue eyes had got the better of me.

As things got exciting, I did what I'm sure so many of us have done before. Knowing, as ever, that I should pull on a condom and put into practice all my safe-sex education from the last 20 years, I was, well, you know, just enjoying it too much. And after all, he was beautiful, and we were both horny - so fuck it, we went for it.

Oh woe is me! This, of course, was certainly not the first time. Being honest, I do think it's important to keep a regular check on your sexual health, whatever you do, however often you do it and no matter how safe you choose to be. The choices about what we do in our private lives are our own to make, but we each have responsibilities to those whom we choose to sleep with, however fleetingly.

So once more, I found myself sloping off to 'the clinic' for a check-up whilst hanging my head in apparent shame. Instead of going to my local, I thought I'd give the Birmingham LGBTQ Centre, based on the corner of Bristol Street and Smallbrook Queensway, a whirl, and see if, surrounded by my fellow brothers and sisters, the experience might be a little less awkward than being prodded and poked by my straight cousins.

I don't know about you, but attending any STI clinic always comes with the usual feelings of sordid guilt. 'Shame' rules the day. All my exciting nights out and the odd hook-up on Scruff is inevitably laid bare for those in a room to record for the stats, adding to the stereotype of inept promiscuity that's allegedly so rife within the family.

Sat there, usually on a cold plastic chair in a room full of highly trained people, it always feels to me a bit like fessing up to your granny. You can't help but feel mortally ashamed, even though you've actually done nothing wrong. I don't know, perhaps it's just me?

The nurses and reception staff at these clinics are, after all, usually really professional, and I'm sure that, although I enjoy a healthy sex life as much as the next person, I'm not as free-spirited or as wild as others may be.

Yet as I take a moment or three to answer those first few questions, especially the one about the number of sexual 'partners', female and male, that I've slept with since my last check-up, I always feel like a Ho!

The first one, female, is always easy to answer: None. The second, well... time starts to tick by as I think back... and after much mulling and counting in my head, I give a figure.. But even that is complicated: 'Perhaps it was x or maybe y? I can't be certain because did x actually mean 'sex' anyway?'

Either way, it always ends the same - with a sensible talk, a few blood samples, a swab or two and a urine pot. Then off I trot, to await those foreboding text messages with a positively palpable amount of dread, making yet another silent prayer to be good and simply more risk-averse.

So, based on many experiences of old, this is what I expected from my visit to the clinic. But let me tell you, visiting the Birmingham LGBTQ Centre was nothing like what I expected. I met the most amazing, fun-filled people I've had the pleasure of talking to in a long time. From being treated like a VIP and having two of their team take my samples, I laughed, I howled and I cried because they were such hilariously good fun.

We chatted about life and safe-sex, of course, but also so much more; from the sad degree of racism on the worldwide LGBTQ scene, to the importance of tolerance, gay family and being part of a living, breathing, vibrant LGBTQ community both in Birmingham and, more broadly, the Midlands. I had a blast.

They are clearly gifted in their art of being kind. Gone was the guilt, gone was the shame, and any thoughts of my granny were long forgotten. I never thought a sexual health screen could be, in the words of Miranda Hart's on-screen mother, 'such fun'.

The team there work hard and make you feel confident to be yourself. You can express yourself to people who really get it. They are angels of the city, guardians of our community, and they deserve our absolute respect.

I certainly know where I'll be heading for my next regular check-up.

ON THE BALL with Steve Ball

Brave New World

No, you are not waking up from a nightmare. On 20 January, Donald Trump will be sworn in as the 45th President of the United States. His presidency is widely regarded as a disaster for the environment, international relations, human rights and the world economy. And it's unlikely to be good news for the LGBT community either.

Trump has called himself a 'supporter' of LGBT rights, but his actions in appointing to key posts in his administration some of the most virulently anti-gay politicians in the country appear to suggest otherwise.

Topping the anti-gay list is Vice President-elect Mike Pence, who Chad Griffin, the president of the Human Rights Campaign, called "the number-one face of hate in the country." Early in his career, Pence advocated stopping government funding for HIV treatment and instead investing in gay conversion therapy. He has urged Congress to "oppose any effort to put gay and lesbian relationships on an equal legal status," and as recently as 2015 signed a bill that allowed businesses to refuse services to LGBT people.

Trump's choice of attorney general - Senator Jeff Sessions - voted for a failed constitutional ban on same-sex marriage and opposed expanding the definition of a hate crime to include LGBT people. Trump also named Betsy DeVos - a billionaire Republican donor and anti-gay activist - as education secretary.

Although Trump can't single-handedly overturn the Supreme Court decision legalising gay marriage, there are many other ways he could harm LGBT rights. His Justice Department could undermine hate crime protections for LGBT people and withdraw Obama's directive that schools cannot discriminate against transgender students. He could also repeal Obama's orders prohibiting employers from discriminating against LGBT employees.

But just before we fall into a false sense of security that this could never happen here, we need to realise that Trump has supporters in the UK too. One is Milo Yiannopoulos, an English/Greek citizen who, in the latest chapter of his ongoing quest to court controversy, has taken to calling Trump "Daddy". Milo is a prominent voice in the 'Alt-Right' movement, which has been associated with white supremacism, a hardline stance on immigration, and support for Donald Trump. And just before we think this is all a straight conspiracy, let's remind ourselves that Milo Yiannopoulos is himself gay. Not that that's stopped him speaking about his concerns regarding homosexuality: "Is being homosexual 'wrong'? Something somewhere inside of me says Yes."

If we allow the rhetoric of hate that is sweeping the US to establish itself here in the UK, the rights that the LGBT community has fought so long and hard for could be lost. We are living in a Brave New World in which we will all have to stand up and be counted.

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